

Window on Jordan

By John Fenn
Star Staff Writer

SAYING FAREWELL is always hard, it seems, especially so when you have made a lot of friends. Whenever you leave a place, there is a period of reflection; looking back on the time you spent in a particular country, the people you met and made friends with, the places, the memories.

The nicest thing I will remember about my stay in Jordan, is the everyday pleasures of the Arabic language. When I return to England, I don't expect to hear "God be with you" (*Allah ma'aki*) very often, unless of course I was talking to the local vicar. The same applies for "Peace be upon you" (*As salaam*

alaykum), and "God give you strength" (*Ya'rik Al Afiyah*).

We used to use these expressions in England in the past, but over the centuries they gradually went out of fashion—now, a simple "hello" or "good-bye" suffices in our culture. I am told that the word "good-bye" actually came from the expression "God be with you," but that the sands of time has resulted in the condensed version.

Here in Jordan, religion and piety are still at the forefront of people's lives. They are woven into the fabric of the society. I doubt very much that I will see minibuses and trucks in England displaying stickers saying "God" (*Allah*). The same goes for the

famous 'London cabbies' painting "What God wants" (*Ma shaa Allah*) onto the rear of the vehicles. Writing these statements onto vehicles has always fascinated me, although I think greater care needs to be made sometimes. After all, and as an example, does God really want a dilapidated bus, belching dense clouds of smoke into the atmosphere?

It is common knowledge that society in the West is undergoing a 'spiritual crisis'. Church attendance figures have declined drastically from say 50 years ago, and the younger generations of today are a lot

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The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

Le Jourdain
Supplément en français du Star

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AMMAN, 3 9 DECEMBER 1998, VOLUME 9, NUMBER 26, 350 FILS

اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Al Jalwa, a tribal custom that governs social relations

By Ibtisam Awadat
Star Staff Writer

"RULES ARE made to be broken," is one of the most famous proverbs of our time. However, there is another worldwide proverb which is acclaimed among the people of the desert: Rules are not made to be broken, they are made to be respected!

Back in the early days, Bedouins in the Arab world set out their own definition of social justice, as a step towards controlling the Mafia-like killings among tribes.

According to a Bedouin custom called 'Al Jalwa' or 'Al Jalwa', the family of a convicted murderer must leave his home and settle far away from their tribe. This is the tribal way of preventing revenge killings by the relatives of the victims. It is especially the case if the two families happened to live in the same tribe, village or neighborhood.

Following tribal customs—in the case of a murder or in honor crimes—relatives of the criminal must leave their houses and seek protection from another neutral and strong tribe.

Dr. Mohammed Abu Hassan, a judge in the Cassation Court, told *The Star*, "The ones who leave the tribe, however, are the immediate four descending ancestral families of the criminal," Abu Hassan explained.

Meanwhile, the family of the fifth grandfather doesn't have to leave. Instead, they offer a She-camel, as a pledge of forgiveness requesting that their cattle be left alone to graze in the tribe's area. 'Ba'eer Al Noum'—another She-camel—is also offered as a way for asking for forgiveness. After slaughtering a camel, they ask for the family to be protected.

The moment the crime is committed, the relatives of the criminal start to leave to prevent any confrontation with the victim's relatives. There follows a three and one third day period where contact between the two families is prohibited. This is a very sensitive time where anger from both sides can end with another crime.

"Several Bedouin norms were suspended according to a 1976 decision, which abolished tribal laws in the Kingdom. Despite this, Al Jalwa is one of the Bedouin customs which

the criminal's relatives start to pack their belongings.

Nevertheless, many families find it hard to leave their residences and businesses just because one of their members committed a crime. In some cases, an evacuation may include hundreds of people.

"Years ago, I called on the heads of the tribes to conclude an anonymous agreement to review the procedures of the Jalwa," Dr. Abu Hassan added.

"All in all, the evacuation of the offender's family is a good procedure to prevent any possible friction between the two families," said Col. Hisham Nsour, head of the Amman Security Dept. "Most of the time, when we receive information about a murder, we inform the suspect's family, so if they want to leave, we provide all security measures needed to protect them," Nsour told *The Star*.

He added that the Security Department is keen on making sure that any revenge action—destroying or burning the criminal's belongings—is ended as quickly as possible.

Jordanian tribal elders recently signed a code of conduct on the occasion of His Majesty King Hussein's birthday. The King's Secretary for Tribal Affairs, Prince Mohammed Ben Ghazi, witnessed the signing ceremony.

"According to the new document, only the criminal's family should leave the tribe," said Salameh Hiani, member of the Lower House.

"The articles of the document are still unpublished, but we must surely support the tendency to change some of the customs which don't suit a civilized society," Hiani continued.

The good thing is that all tribes in the Kingdom approved the agreement as a step to reconsider an ongoing custom which is affecting our social relations in Jordan.



Israeli riot police fire teargas into a Muslim cemetery as rioting breaks out in Arab East Jerusalem 2 December at the end of the funeral of a Palestinian man stabbed to death this morning by a suspected Jewish nationalist. A masked man stabbed 41-year-old Osama Musa Abu Aisha Natshe to death in an attack which Israeli police said may have been the work of a Jewish serial killer. Reuters

Parliament starts session in style

By Star Staff Writer

THE 13TH ordinary session of Parliament, which opened this week, promises to be very eventful, with draft laws being very much part of the agenda. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, delivered the Speech from the Throne on behalf of His Majesty King Hussein who is undergoing the final part of his treatment at the Mayo Clinic in the United States.

Prince Hassan reiterated Jordan's support for the Palestinians and their legitimate right to establish their own state on their land.

In his speech, Prince Hassan said that the government would tackle a number of internal issues in addition to the policy of the government especially those regarding the economic strategies and the method of privatization that is currently followed.

The opening ceremony was attended by members of the Royal Family and by Lower House deputies and Upper House Senators.

Following the Speech from the Throne, deputies voted to elect speaker of the Lower House for the coming parliamentary year.

Abdel Hadi Majali won the position after a heated race with his rival Ali Abu Al Ragheb.

Former Speaker of the House Saad Hayel Srour who led the legislature for the last four parliamentary years stepped down after losing in the first round.

Prior to the elections, Srour was promised the vote of his 18-member bloc in addition to the National Bloc. Srour only got 18 votes which are believed to be the votes of his bloc.

Deputies of the National Bloc proved disunited since their votes were dispersed among several candidates that ultimately affected the position of the former Speaker.

But observers say deputies were happy seeing the elections as a real exercise in the democratic process, a development.

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Sanctions sway the Iraqi stock market

By Howard Schneider

BAGHDAD—The investor was holding his fire until the end of the trading session, waiting for the last 15 minutes to decide whether to join the day's sell-off or stand pat.

After all, these can be volatile days at the Baghdad Stock Exchange, where players follow the latest military threats from Washington as surely as Wall Street watches interest rates, and everybody is banking on the day when trade sanctions are lifted and their investments soar.

At around 5 cents a share, even the priciest stocks on this market have nowhere to go but up.

"Most of these companies are solid—cola, paints, agriculture, alcohol" and other goods that can turn a profit even under the trade embargo, said T. Jacob, an engineer who has joined the growing number of Iraqis pumping billions of local dinars into the five-year-old Baghdad exchange. "Everything will change after sanctions," he said.

While most news from Iraq centers on malnourished children and tense confrontations over UN weapons inspections, the trading floor presents a sharply different image: A roomful of rambunctious brokers scribble handwritten quotes on a wall board while dozens of investors, standing behind a rail, shout orders to buy and sell.

Three television monitors flash the prices and the number of shares traded. "When we started, people said, 'It can't work,'" said Sabih Dulaimi, who left his job in the computer department of a local bank to establish the exchange several years after the end of the 1991 Gulf War, and is now its director general. "Now we have 500 sales per day...we have good companies. They all existed before the war, and they give a good profit."

Part parlor game, the Baghdad exchange lacks the electronic gadgetry, legal oversight and detailed disclosure rules that characterize exchanges

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The protocol of marriage comes under debate in China

By Henry Chu

BEIJING—Miss Wang is 23, involved with a married man, and nonchalant about the idea of being branded a criminal. After all, she reasons, society already slaps so many other epithets on her—mistress, concubine, home-wrecker—that one more hardly seems to matter.

"People have always treated folks like us as immoral or even illegal. I'm used to it," said Wang, a saleswoman whose affair has gone on for the past three years. "What can I do? Love is love; you can't help it."

But not if some conservative elements in China have their way. The world's most populous nation is pondering proposals that would leave 'third parties' such as Wang liable for destroying marriages and toughen China's liberal divorce laws.

The proposals are among a raft of ideas being considered by the Communist government for overhauling its mar-

riage regulations, a vague and outdated body of 37 legal articles unchanged since 1980. After 18 years of dizzying development and social change, scholars are trying to update the regulations to accommodate modern concepts such as domestic violence and the equitable distribution of property between divorced spouses in China's new consumer age.

Although experts stress that any revisions are months away, word of the more controversial suggestions has leaked out and sparked a public stir. The debate has exposed an increasingly tolerant attitude toward private conduct in China—and also an accompanying backlash.

The opposition to stricter rules governing bedroom behavior has been surprisingly vocal from a populace usually cautious when expressing discontent and prudish when talking about sex.

"If extramarital affairs and so-called 'third parties' are considered

criminal, it will be a setback," declared writer An Dun. "Using the law to judge human emotions and feelings means violating the popular will."

She should know. The 29-year-old columnist with a Beijing newspaper has interviewed hundreds of people about their relationships and compiled some of their stories into what is one of China's top-selling book this year. Her somewhat misnamed tell-all, "Absolute Privacy," details real-life deceptions, heartbreaks and adulterous romps to hundreds of thousands of enthralled readers.

Its popularity reflects the groundswell of public interest in sex and other personal matters in China, a fascination spawned by heady reforms that have loosened economic and social controls in the past two decades and shifted the focus from collective to individual behavior.

Gone are the ubiquitous baggy Mao suits of yore, deliberately designed to hide the sex of the wearer; today's youth don tight jeans and prattle about discos where dancers writhe in cages with barely enough clothing to make a Mao

cap. Forget Mao's little red book; more people are likely to cite his unauthorized biography, written by his personal doctor, who alleges that the Great Helmsman himself regularly disported with numerous young women.

Prostitution, virtually extinct after the 1949 Communist takeover, is widespread once again. Extramarital relationships are reputedly so common in southern China that the city government of Guangzhou issued a circular earlier this month urging that men who practice bigamy, "co-habitate with concubines" or provide financial support for mistresses be sent to labor camps for re-education, the official China Daily reported.

The public's liberalized attitude toward sex disarms more conservative members of society, some of whom fear a supposed Western-style moral collapse lurking in the shadows and are advocating tougher marriage and divorce standards to prevent it.

China's rate of divorces to marriages, while substantially lower than that in the United States, has jumped from about 4

percent in the late 1970s to 13 percent last year. Splitting up is a relatively easy matter: A couple can go their separate ways in as little as 30 days simply by informing their neighborhood committee of a loss of "mutual affection." Even a contested divorce is usually resolved within a year, scholars say.

The suggested amendments to the marriage law call for a three-year separation for quarreling couples, with some kind of counseling or mediation to make sure divorce is the only way out. Sexual fidelity in marriage would be a legal requirement, with compensatory damages to be paid by the cheating spouse and the "third party" if the marriage dies.

Negative public reaction to these proposals was swift.

"Even law cannot assure that every marriage will have a happy ending, especially when passion fades or turns into bitterness," one editorialist, Qing Qiang, wrote in the *China Daily*.

"A legal obligation to be faithful to each other can do little to secure rapport

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Arab Bank Strength and stability



Khalid Shoman

THE RECENT rating assigned to Arab Bank Plc by the US' Moody's Investors Service have proved once again the Bank's ability to stand firm in the face of the economic turmoil in

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PM says governments can't be measured by days

AMMAN—Prime Minister Fayed Tarawneh said to reporters at the weekly press briefing, Monday, that Jordan will remain steadfast in aborting all outside attempts designed to harm the country either through "provocative measures or ill-intended premeditated agendas."

Tarawneh added that many of these attempts will be unveiled through cooperation between the government and the media.

Outlining the main objectives of the coming year, the Prime Minister reaffirmed his government's commitment to the state spending priorities through cooperation with the two Houses of Parliament. The government intends to prepare the 2000 draft budget plan during the first quarter of the coming year, he said.

In reference to the expected reduction in the price of bread, Tarawneh said the government will take its time to examine all the available scenarios to come up with balanced and sound decisions. Reducing bread price is a major component in these scenarios, the Prime Minister added.

Answering a question on national dialogue, Tarawneh said his government is committed to pursue dialogue with all national parties on a wide range of issues concerning the interests

of the country and the citizens. It is not necessary to have the Prime Minister participating in every single dialogue, he said. Members of the cabinet are holding dialogues with various sectors of the society focusing on issues pertinent to their ministries' activities, Tarawneh told reporters.

Answering a question on Jordan's participation in the final status negotiations between the Palestinians and Israel, Tarawneh said Jordan does not have a direct role in the Palestinian-Israeli final status negotiations but it has vital interests to protect. Jordan has to have its say in the outcome of the negotiations especially on the issue of refugees, he said.

Since Jordan is the largest host country of Palestinian refugees, we believe that refugees have the right of compensation or repatriation in accordance with UN General Assembly resolution 425.

Concerning the current escalation in the occupied south Lebanon, the Prime Minister called for an unconditional Israeli troop withdrawal in implementation of UN resolution 425.

He said Jordan backs the convening of an Arab summit proposed by the Emir of Qatar to discuss current Arab affairs. However, he said such a gathering must be well-prepared.

On his government's accomplishments after 100 days in power, the Prime Minister said assessment is the responsibility of those monitoring the government's performance mainly the Parliament and the fourth authority 'the media'.

"I personally cannot understand the limit of 100 days," he said. Things can not be measured by days but rather by the regional and international circumstances, he added.

The government's work is continuing in various fields and if some decision are being delayed, that is because the government is keen not to issue hasty decision, Tarawneh said. "How can 100 days be enough to address problems such as poverty and unemployment," the Prime Minister wondered. What is more important is to make sure that things are going in the right direction, he added during the meeting which was attended by Information Minister Naser Judeh.

Answering a question regarding reports published by Arabic papers based in foreign countries indicating that His Majesty King Hussein during a recent meeting with the Jordanian press delegation in Washington, DC expressed dissatisfaction on the internal situation in Jordan and his plans to make overall changes upon his return

home, the Prime Minister said he knows nothing about these reports especially those published by non-Jordanian papers. "We are not concerned with such things," he added.

He said he met with His Majesty the King recently in Washington and reviewed with him the government's performance.

The King was completely satisfied and "I don't know how people interpret such things," Tarawneh said.

On Jordan's stand concerning sanctions imposed on Iraq, Libya and Sudan, the Prime Minister said that the Jordanian diplomacy has never been and will never be slackened in calling for lifting the embargo as it mainly affects people's lives.

He said Jordan does not believe that trade embargos like the ones imposed on Iraq, Sudan and Libya are an effective form of punishment against the leadership. He added that such things can only harm the innocent lives of peoples of the country. These are not sound measures, he told reporters.

He said Jordan was the second country hurt most by the embargo imposed on Iraq. "It had direct consequences on us to an extent that we can say the embargo on Iraq was an embargo on Jordan," he added.

Her Majesty Queen Noor was chosen as 'Favourite Woman of the Year 1419 AH-1998 AD' by the Voice of Islam Foundation. Queen Noor was honored for her great efforts in humanitarian issues around the world.



Sanctions sway the Iraqi stock market

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elsewhere in the world. Traders have to be physically present to do business, Jacob said, and buyers are urged to beware. Moves by wealthy merchants or political figures can run up an individual price quickly, and those on the floor listen closely to the rumors of who is buying what.

Nevertheless, brokers say, the stock exchange has developed a rudimentary system of checks and balances that prevents gross abuses. A small array of computers, scavenged from local banks and government ministries, tabulates each broker's trades, and each day's sales must be settled promptly for cash. The universe of participants is small enough to per-

mit a certain amount of self-policing. Bounced checks or other problems, for example, lead to quick censure and a ban from the floor.

The exchange also has implemented "circuit breaker" rules to avoid gross manipulation. Stocks cannot increase or decrease more than 10 percent during any of the two-hour trading sessions, which are held three times per week. Only companies that have made a profit for two consecutive years can be listed.

Partly as a result of such rules, the exchange has instilled enough confidence among investors that has so far raised \$5 billion dollars—about \$5 million—for its 95 listed companies.

For the Record

Fayed Tarawneh meets Sudan's Interior Minister

AMMAN—Prime Minister Fayed Tarawneh met, Monday, the visiting Sudanese Interior Minister Lt. Gen. Abdel Rabeeem Mohammad. Present at the meeting was Interior Minister Nayef Al Qadi. Talks during the meeting focused on means of enhancing cooperation in areas of public security and civil defense and issuing of passports and other civil status documents. Later Qadi and the Sudanese Minister signed the minutes of bilateral cooperation on these subjects.

Prince Hassan receives a letter of thanks from Qureia

AMMAN—His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent received a letter of thanks from President of the Palestinian Legislative Council Ahmed Qureia. He expressed his appreciation and that of Palestinian legislators of Jordan's full support of the Palestinian people. He also affirmed the importance of promoting brotherly ties between the two peoples and their leaderships.

Hourani meets American official

WASHINGTON, DC—Minister of Industry and Trade Mohammad Saleh Hourani reviewed Tuesday in Washington with the US Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman US supplies of wheat and grains to Jordan. Following the talks, the United States earmarked a \$60 million soft loan to Jordan to buy wheat, \$20 million of which is given to imports of the private sector. Mr Hourani thanked the American official for granting 100,000 tons of wheat to Jordan and requested a similar quantity of wheat in the near future. Mr Hourani has met earlier the Director of the American Board of Wheat (ABW) to discuss all issues related to importing wheat from the USA. The ABW agreed to give Jordan grants to hold seminars and workshops and to send Jordanian technicians to the US to train them on issues related to wheat.

The protocol of marriage comes under debate in China

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or prevent betrayal between two people."

Such controversy exasperates the experts—not all of them conservative—who are trying to overhaul the law.

"The reports that the (proposed) new marriage law focuses on divorce and extramarital affairs are both one-sided and inaccurate," complained Yang Dawen, a law professor at People's University and leader of the task force charged with making recommendations to the government.

"The purpose of new mar-

riage legislation is to fill gaps in the law."

Those gaps are considerable. The 1980 guidelines, quickly drafted after the turbulent 1966-76 Cultural Revolution, say little to nothing about spousal abuse, annulments, or—of prime importance under China's one-child policy—custody rights.

As a result of China's gradual opening-up, marriages to foreigners have increased, but the old law is silent on how to handle them. Nor does it offer guidance on what to do if a spouse is missing, incapacitated or insane.

And while a vague pronouncement on fair divorce settlements worked when the average Chinese couple owned "a pillow, pillowcases and a basin," said professor Chen Mingxia, more specific rules are necessary now that many couples share furniture, a microwave and even a car.

"We're on the verge of the 21st century, but the current marriage law doesn't fit the demands of a modern society," said Chen, a senior legal research fellow at the prestigious Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and a member of the task force.

Individual freedom, if not societal approval, is what drives Miss Wang, the 23-year-old saleswoman in love with a 40-something man who already has a wife and child. "Everybody (thinks) it's wrong. But it's not a simple right-and-wrong question," said Wang, who asked that her full name not be used.

Even if the government were to impose legal sanctions against adultery, Wang added, "I don't believe that someone will come and arrest me just for that."

Besides, we've always been hiding. We never dare to publicize our relationship, and I think it'll remain that way for who knows how long."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Parliament starts session in style

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opment which hadn't happened since 1989.

In his first speech to Parliament after his election, the newly elected speaker promised his colleagues to work for the country and to activate the role of the Legislature.

Several deputies believe that Abdel Hadi Majali will deal on equal terms with representatives of the executive authority.

According to them, this will ensure the Lower House its vital role and will guarantee his nomination for the same post for the coming two parliamentary years of this council.

However, other deputies believe that no substantial change in regard to the leadership of the Lower House will take place since the current and former speaker came from the same political school.

Furthermore, Bassam Haddadin, a leftist, was elected as Majali's first deputy. The choice of Haddadin is expected by many to have a positive effect on the political partisanship in the Kingdom.

In yesterday's meeting, Wednesday 2 December, Parliament also elected the permanent committees for the coming year.

The State Budget for 1999, is considered as one of the important issues that is to be debated by Parliament later this week. The budget is estimated at JD 2.2 billion.

The Star
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Jordan celebrates the 50th anniversary of the declaration of human rights

TO MARK the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Jordanian Society for Human Rights (JSHR) will participate in the upcoming celebrations due to take place this week in Paris.

Suleiman Sweiss, head of the JSHR, will represent Jordan in the celebrations, which

will start on 7 December, organized by the French government and Amnesty International.

During his presence in Paris, Dr Sweiss will also take part in an international summit to be held in cooperation with several international NGOs. The summit will focus on methods

of protecting human rights in the world. Dr Sweiss was chosen to represent Jordan for his solid stands and activism in the field of human rights.

Over 300 people will gather for the occasion. Participants in the event are activists in the field of human rights.

A farewell to Jordan

Continued from page 1

more materialistic in their focus than their grandparents ever were. This is not the time or the place to debate whether this is right or wrong—I am not going to preach. What I can say, however, is that I would feel very awkward saying "God be with you" to someone in England—you just don't hear it very often. It is not a part of the everyday speech.

Here in Jordan, it is the other way around. The term is used often in the Arabic language, and I must say, I enjoy using it. Whenever I use the term, the recipient always responds warmly—maybe out of surprise that a foreigner had wished that particular thought.

Will this way of life ever change? Will globalization change the way people interact with each other in Jordan? In the recent Speech to the Throne made by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, during the Ordinary Session of the 13th Jordanian Parliament, it was suggested that Islam and Christianity were coming under increasing threat. In the speech, the Crown Prince said, "We are going through an era in which Islam and Muslims are subjected to an unjust campaign. A similar campaign is directed against the identity of Christian Arabs. Such campaigns should be confronted through proper and appropriate upbringing and education of present and future generations...things should be put right at their point of origin, relying on positive interaction and engagement with other nations and civilizations." Hopefully, such a campaign will be implemented, one

that allows a reasoned approach to the cultures of others. The italicized sentence reiterates one of the benefits that I feel I have obtained from my stay in Jordan.

Anyhow, the time has come for me to make my farewell to Jordan. I will leave the last words to William Lisle Bowles; words which are apt for the occasion—an Englishman thinking about saying farewell. The poem is entitled *Dover Cliffs*, and I don't think the law of copyright applies because he died in 1850!

On these white cliffs, that calm above the flood
Uplift their shadowy heads,
And at their feet
Scarce hear the surge that has for ages beat,

Sure many a lonely wanderer has stood;
And while the distant murmur met his ear,
And o'er the distant billows
The sails he saw.

Sailed slow, has thought of
all his heart must leave
Tomorrow; of the friends he
loved most dear;
But if, like me, he knew how
fruitless all
The thoughts that would full
join the past recall;
Soon would he quell the
rings of his heart,
And brave the wild winds
and unhearing tide.
The world, his country, and
God his guide.

HSBC to establish global brand

HSBC Holdings plc is to create a unified brand for the HSBC Group, using HSBC and the company's hexagon symbol as its marketing name everywhere it operates. This major initiative is designed to achieve full recognition for HSBC as one of the world's largest and most successful financial services organizations. The marketing names of all of HSBC Holdings' wholly-owned commercial banking subsidiaries will be changed immediately. Midland Bank, Hongkong Bank, Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corporation, HSBC Bank Canada, Banco HSBC Bamerindus, HSBC Banco Roberts and The British Bank of the Middle East, will all adopt.

Legal names of Group companies will be reviewed and changed where appropriate as soon as practicable, and after obtaining all necessary regulatory approvals, to be consistent with the new branding.

Branch signage and interiors, cheque books, credit cards, forms, stationery, advertising and marketing materials will all be unified to build and reinforce the brand. HSBC Holdings plans to complete most of the changes by 1 January, 2000 at an estimated cost of \$50 million, excluding advertising.

Subsidiaries already using the HSBC name, such as HSBC Investment Bank, will also adopt the new brand. Certain majority-owned subsidiaries will incorporate HSBC into their existing legal name. No changes are envisaged for companies in which HSBC Holdings has a minority interest.

Previously, the HSBC Group had taken an endorsed approach to its branding. "Member HSBC Group" formed the umbrella brand whereby Group companies identified themselves as part of HSBC. The HSBC hexagon symbol, first introduced in early 1983, was subsequently adopted worldwide and is already well-established.

HSBC Group Chairman John Bond said: "Over the years the HSBC Group has grown both organically and by acquisition. Historically, we have operated under different names in different places. Our policy of retaining the separate identities of the companies we acquired because they were well-known names in their local markets served us well for many years. However, times change and we must change with them."

Arab Bank Strength and stability

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the emerging markets, says Deputy Chairman and President of the Arab Bank, Khalid Shoman.

Moody's on 20 November issued the bank highest long and short-term foreign currency deposit ratings of Baa1/Prime-2 and a Bank Financial Strength Rating (BFSR) of C+.

"We have achieved these ratings despite the turmoil that has gripped the world's financial markets and which has had serious repercussions for many financial institutions," Shoman says. "Arab Bank as Moody's note, has a long tradition of surviving wars, nationalizations and economic crisis and has developed crisis management plans that should allow us to meet our obligations under conceivable stress scenarios."

US ratings agency Thomson BankWatch in June assigned Arab Bank Plc a short-term rating of TBW-1, and its branches in the US and Europe a long-term rating of AA-. The bank was assigned its long-standing management, strong capital base, excellent asset quality and front line liquidity and its proven track record in crises and reputation as a true "flight to quality" bank.



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JORDAN

WEEK



An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar

Another party

One more for the road. Another political party is to be established soon to add to the many that already exist in the Kingdom. The Generations Party will have a full agenda that is designed to mobilize the human resource of Jordanians. In this respect also the party would stress the role of the family and women's rights as they are regarded as the basic social unit of education.

Retirement

Doctors could soon look forward to pleasant retirement. The Jordanian Medical Association is in the process of changing its retirement rules. If the new rules are passed by the general assembly that is due Friday, 4 December, then doctors would have a handsome pension fund, receiving up to JD 300 each month in retirement pay.

Going to court

Tension in the relations between the government and opposition parties may rise again. At the heart of the new outbreak is the refusal of the government to allow a demonstration to take place in support of Iraq. The National Committee for the Defence of Iraq (NCDI), which is composed of members from Islamist, leftist and nationalist parties, is so angry, that it is to take a lawsuit against the government for its failure to allow a rally to take place in support of the beleaguered country. NCID leaders said that they would hold more rallies in the near future regardless of the government views.

Fines

From now on employers would be fined JD 50 every month if they are found to employ illegal workers. The new fine is designed to make foreign, mainly Arab workers, to fix their documents in line with the laws of the country. The bid to organize the labor market has started in September. Greater coordination is taking place between the police and the Ministry of Labor to identify foreign workers who have not put their house in order. Also more inspectors from the Ministry is likely to be seen visiting shops in the next few weeks.



Amman, (Petra)—His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent said the His Majesty King Hussein continues to hold the banner of the founder of the Kingdom and maintain the democratic tradition. He has always respected the Constitution and the Parliamentary life, as well as promoting true democracy in this state of law and institutions despite adverse conditions that have prevailed in the region.

His Royal Highness added that the Hashemites who introduced parliamentary systems into the countries of the Arab East, in Damascus and Baghdad, adhered to the principle of shura and insisted on the involvement of Parliament in the political life. In his Speech from The Throne at the opening of the second ordinary session of the 13th Parliament, Prince Hassan said that the government is determined to

achieve the highest level of cooperation and coordination with the legislative Authority.

His Royal Highness said: "We pin much hope on the considerable contributions of the members of the Lower House to serving the interest of both country and citizen with utmost loyalty, commitment and objectivity within policies that aim at creating consensus on the basis of mutual trust and conviction."

Jordan remembers World Aids Day

JORDAN HAS joined the world last week in the International AIDS Day celebration, which is held on 1 December every year. The annual celebration embarks on public awareness of this threatening disease.

The Ministry of Health formed a national program in 1986 as a step to fight the ailment through adopting international procedures of the UNAIDS Program.

Minister of Health, Dr Nael Ajlouni, stressed that Jordan is deeply concerned with joining international efforts in fighting the epidemic.

In addition, the minister shed light on the total number of people in Jordan, which official records estimate to be

113 Jordanians, and 81 foreigners of whom 45 have died until now. However, according to unofficial resources, the number of patients is much higher. Moreover, 30 percent of those who were infected are between the age of 15-29 years old.

The UNAIDS Program was launched in 1986, at the time when officials diagnosed the first AIDS case in the Kingdom. The infection was the result of a contaminated blood transfer, during an operation which took place abroad.

The program set out suitable ways to fight the disease and limit the increasing number of infected individuals. During the past years, the

Ministry adopted a national strategy to increase public awareness of the suitable ways of mingling with AIDS patients.

The UNAIDS Program, issued a special announcement saying that it will offer Jordan \$82,500 to support the launch of a wide campaign, which is expected to reach out to the Jordanian youth, especially in the urban areas of the Kingdom.

Furthermore, it is reported that most of the AIDS cases in Jordan are the result of sexual intercourse. The report urged the government and its concerned departments to spread out sexual education among schools, and private and public institutions. It is

agreed that unemployment, and poverty are among the indirect factors behind immoral sexual practices in our society.

The government pointed out that social education is a must. As a result, a new national project was initiated recently to include young people in the public awareness, and to involve them within social education.

According to the UN Program, over 7000 people of ages between 10-24 years are infected every day around the world. Today, over a 30 million people from all over the world, are carrying the virus in their blood!

Press Cocktail

Edited by Ibtihal Ahmed

Scaling down the fat

Dr Abdallah Al Khateeb writing in *Ad Dastour* discusses bureaucracy from a personal experience. Bureaucracy has come to mean, he says, delay, irresponsibility and leaving things unsolved. But in the midst of all the routine and paperwork, one can find efficient workers who do care about dealing with people quickly and fairly. In this respect, he cites the Al Amal Cancer Center as an example, for the unfairness they received from public institutions.

He says that when the Center needed extra telephone lines, it was required to pay a fee of a commercial facility which was JD 330 for each line and JD 75 as collateral. However these fees drop dramatically if the installation was residential purposes, a JD100 for a telephone line and JD 15 as insurance.

Al Khateeb argues that since Al Amal Center is a charitable non-profit organization, it should be allowed to pay the housing facility fee. But his arguments have fallen on deaf ears. This was until he filed a complaint to the new chairman of the Telecommunication Company Mr Ali Shukri. He in turn changed the system to one which conformed to logic and fairness and exempted the Center from paying any installation fees. Al Khateeb admired Mr Shukri's conduct saying that it should set an example to other official bureaucracies, for he dealt competently and openly with the issues at hand, and not mentioning his speed and precision in making urgent decisions.

Al Khateeb's second experience was with the postal services when he needed to send a package from Al Amal Center to one of the cancer centers in the USA. He said "because the package contained a video tape describing the work of the center, we were asked to verify the contents of the tape with the Press and Publication Dept., something which we didn't need to do had we sent the tape via one of the private carrier companies." He points out that having to perform this has no logical justification at all.

However, when Al Khateeb complained to Iyad Al Qatan, the director of the PPD, he too was puzzled about the number of unnecessary and vague procedures that are outdated and should be abolished. Indeed after Al Khateeb's phone call, Qatan did away with the procedures which required charity organizations and the media to verify the incoming and outgoing audio or TV materials.

"We need more people like Shukri and Al Qatan, people who can be entrusted to posts of responsibility, who can make the right decisions with confidence and are not afraid to stick to their decisions, and people who can speed the procedures of their departments," Al Khateeb concludes.

Human rights in schools

Fakhri Quw'ar in *Al Rai*, talks about human rights and about the people's ignorance of these rights which are basic, natural and guaranteed by the Jordanian Constitution. Even though it should be common knowledge that people have the right to express their views and beliefs, many Jordanians are afraid to practice this simple right, because they have no idea about it. On top of that, official departments prefer the masses to stay ignorant about such rights, because they are not prepared to take the responsibility for guaranteeing them.

Quw'ar thinks the perfect solution for this problem is by giving the citizens enough information about their rights, not only through the press and media, but by including a subject of human rights in the school curriculum. If the Education Ministry could include such a class every week, then pupils would grow up knowing their rights as human beings and as citizens of the state.

Teaching people about their rights and obligations to the state will be beneficial to both. It will help people to stand up for what they believe in, and the government will commit itself to guarantee the rights of its citizens.

Five weeklies close amidst violation

By Star Staff Writer

FIVE WEEKLY newspapers closed down having failed to put their house in order in the time limit that was set for 30 November.

The newspapers who were suspended according to the new Press and Publications Law, were not able to submit the required legal documents to the Press and Publications Dept. on time.

As a result, *Fares*, *Al Mithaq*, *Akhbar Al Osbou*, *Al Huda* and *Sawt Al Mar'a* ceased publication on 1st December.

However, the five daily newspapers: *Al Rai*, *Ad Dastour*, *Al Arab Al Yawm*, *Jordan Times*, and *Al Aswaq* rectified their legal position, in addition to 10 weekly newspapers.

The newspapers who were closed down failed to meet the articles that stipulated the period concerning the chief editor and that of the capital requirement.

According to the new law, the capital of a daily newspaper can't be less than JD 500,000.

In addition, the chief editor must at least have eight years of experience, of which three must be as a registered member in the Jordan Press Association (JPA).

On the other hand, the capital of a weekly newspaper isn't

less than JD 100,000, which seems to be a bit farfetched!

Ironically enough, the number of specialized publications have decreased from 400 to a mere 27 periodicals.

However, the total number of newspapers who to adjust their legal position in accordance with the new law is 42 daily, weekly and specialized newspapers.

Princess Sarvath delivers speech

AMMAN—Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath El Hassan praised the distinguished ties between Jordan and France which developed due to the wise policies adopted by the two countries' leadership.

The Princess also noted the importance of French President Jacques Chirac's visit to Jordan in 1996 and the cultural exchange between the two countries.

In a speech she delivered during a ceremony held by French Ambassador, Mr Bernard Emié, to Jordan in honor of a number of Jordanian female students who visited France recently within the cultural exchange program between the two countries.



Princess Sarvath

Princess Sarvath stressed the importance of providing students with data to enable them increase their knowledge. She pointed out that the French language is an important mean for openness to Francophone countries with which Jordan has cultural exchange.

The French Ambassador on his part stressed the importance of exchanging cultural visits among Jordanian and French students with a view to increase their knowledge.

Mass killer sentenced to death

By Star Staff Writer

SAEED QASHASH, has been finally sentenced to death by the Greater Criminal Court. In a heinous crime, the 18-year-old murdered 11 members of his family and his friend last summer, a case which has shocked the Jordanians.

The local community, which proudly considers itself for its respect for family values, felt targeted when the teenager cold-bloodedly raised the gun to end the lives of 12 human beings.

When he confessed to the crime, Saeed said that he did it because of the constant nagging of his father who pushed him to the edge to force him to get good results in the Tawjihi exams, adding that his father threatened to kick him out of the house if he failed.

But then he retracted his confession coming up with a cock and bull story about how a number of strangers came to the house played with the computer which belonged to his brother, gave Saeed a drink that made him unconscious.

However, during interrogation, he reverted back to the original story, and acted out the scenario in front of the police. One week before the crime, Saeed bought a gun, then on 10 June he carried out his crime which was carefully planned.

The first victim was his little sister Karima, then he lead his



Saeed reenacts the murder crime in front of police

mother to the basement where he shot her in the back. After he shot his mother, he told the police that he reached over the psychological edge to start shooting people. "It was normal."

And then it was a shooting spree. Thoraya was his next victim, followed by his brother Mustafa, his sister Wafaa, his father Ameen, then his other sister Insaaf with her two children,

Zeid, Haia and later his brother-in-law, Jamal. They were shot over one after the other during the day. On top of that he shot his close friend Ana Sha'lan in the morning. He said he had to shoot him because he came when he was in the process of shooting his family.

The criminal who seemed to be determined to destroy his family went to get his sister from her relatives' house, shot her and kept her body with the

others in the basement. The last member to be killed was his brother Mohamed.

When he finished he closed the door and built a wall to hide the door and the window.

Earlier the defendant lawyer tried to convince the court that the criminal is suffering some kind of psychological disease, but this was refused, after a specialist physician proved the defendant was fully aware of what he was doing.

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Our Say...

US elusive goal in Iraq

THE UNITED States and Britain are working with the so-called Iraqi opposition abroad, a mosaic of small and fragmented groups, to replace the regime of President Saddam Hussein. US Congress has approved a \$97 million budget to support activities by the Iraqi National Congress and others aimed at destabilizing the Iraqi leadership. Both Washington and London say sanctions, imposed soon after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, will not be lifted until President Saddam has been removed from power.

There is nothing new in these developments. Both countries had expressed their desire to see the present Iraqi leadership toppled paving the way for a new and free Iraq. In fact, the CIA has been working with opposition groups for quite some time without achieving much. Their biggest fiasco came when Iraqi troops marched into Kurdish areas in the north and routed CIA bases there. The Americans, who did nothing to stop Iraqi troops from extending Baghdad's authority over northern areas, had been disappointed by the divisions and rivalries that mark those who gather in the anti-Saddam camp every now and then.

And while Iraq plays a game of cat and mouse with UNSCOM, the issues of the legality of the sanctions and their toll on the Iraqi population begin to force themselves on the agenda of the world community. The US and Britain are all alone in their quest to prolong the sanctions and somehow find a way to get rid of Saddam Hussein, two objectives that are now becoming difficult to maintain.

The fact of the matter is that the Iraqi opposition abroad has lost all credibility by associating itself with the Americans, whom the Iraqi people see as the main cause of their present misery. And why not? American fighters and Cruise missiles leveled Iraqi towns, bridges and factories during the Gulf War; the US continues to back a strict embargo against Baghdad, which has resulted in the death of millions of Iraqi children and civilians. And now the US says it will not allow the sanctions to be removed until the Iraqi leader is replaced.

In the process of the last eight years of the Iraq-US standoff much has been lost, not only at the human level, but also at the legal and institutional levels as well. The UN has suffered irreparable damage to its stature and authority. International law has become a handy tool to implement and pursue narrow objectives of individual states, those who have the clout within the UN Security Council.

By declaring their goal to remove Saddam Hussein from power and work with so-called opposition groups to unsettle the Iraqi regime while maintaining the sanctions, the United States and Britain crossed all acceptable boundaries, laws and conventions. While the Iraqi leader has little sympathy left in the Arab world, the case of Iraq remains a crucial one for the Arabs. The present course adopted by the United States and Britain also has no sympathizers. It is bound to fail in the end.

Instead the UN should work now to alleviate the humanitarian suffering in Iraq. It should move quickly to restore dignity to millions of Iraqis who are caught in the cross-fire. Opposition groups have lost their credibility inside Iraq and will not bring change. The future of Saddam Hussein can only be decided by the Iraqi people; once they are allowed to live their normal lives again.



Syrian Vice President Abdel Halim Khaddam casts his vote for parliamentary elections in Damascus 30 November. Syrians began voting in two-day elections to the 250-seat People's Assembly, where the ruling coalition seemed certain to retain its comfortable majority. Reuters

The Star



Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

An independent political, economic and cultural weekly, published every Thursday in Amman by Jordan Press & Publishing Co. (Ad-Dustour).
Editorial & Advertising: Telephones 5664153 Fax 5667170
P.O. Box 591 Postal Code 11118 Amman - Jordan. e-mail: Star@arabia.com
URL: <http://www.star.arabia.com>

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Ethical standards in the Jordanian press

By Dr Nabil El Sharif

THE RELATION between government and the press in Jordan over the past half century has been characterized by a relentless obsession on the part of government to control, or take the press.

This attempt took, sometimes, an openly heavy-handed approach, as in the case of the aborted 1997 temporary press law, or it took a more liberal turn as was the case in the 1993 law.

These repeated attempts are proof that governments have not achieved their objectives.

It is worth noting, however, that no serious attempt has been made in Jordan to explore the other well recognized route to achieving a responsible press: ethical standards.

Jordanian governments have tried to regulate the press since 1923, when the country was called the Emirate of Trans-Jordan. Article 21 of the 1923 Basic Law of the Emirate of Jordan states that "the press is free within the domain of the law and it should not be searched or investigated prior to publication."

Jordan's Constitution of 1952—which is still in effect—guarantees every citizen's right to freely express himself providing he does not violate the boundaries of the law. But Jordanian press laws have fluctuated in their protection of press freedom. In 1945 an amendment was introduced to the 1933 press law which authorized the Minister of Interior to ban the distribution of any publication that violates the law.

The 1967 press law prohibited the arrest of journalists pending trial, whereas this article was dropped in the 1993 and 1998 laws—the 1993 law did not permit the 'suspension' of newspapers by a court order for three months, but the 1998 law provided the legal framework for this step.

Media scholar Dr Orayb Najjar traces this 'ebb and flow' of the liberalization of the Jordanian press in an excellent article published in the spring 1998 issue of the *Journalism and Mass Communications Quarterly*.

The article stressed that regulating the Jordanian press by focusing on restrictive or liberal press laws will never fulfill the task of advancing the cause of press freedom in Jordan.

Self-regulation through the adoption of codes of ethics and independent press councils is the best option available to solve this dilemma of upholding press freedom without infringing upon the rights of others.

If this option succeeds and is deemed viable, journalists will be better positioned to lobby for the amendment of the current highly restrictive 1998 press law.

It is no secret that prior to the introduction of the 1997 temporary law (which was



El Sharif

also extremely restrictive) high-ranking Jordanian officials asked journalists to regulate themselves and put an end to the excesses of some weekly tabloids. A timetable was even agreed upon both by journalists and these high-ranking officials, to allow journalists to regulate their profession. This deadline was never met by journalists, and the various governments went ahead with the introduction of the current restrictive press laws.

This is definitely not a defense of governments, but an objective description of the chain of events. One cannot help but wonder whether the government would have introduced these laws if self-regulation was considered by journalists.

The attempts to consider self-regulation as an option for the Jordanian press have been inconsistent and sporadic in nature. Except for the newly-adopted Jordanian Press Association law, which addressed the issue of professional standards, all previous laws of the association referred to non-binding law of the Arab Union of Journalists which talks about a code of ethics for Arab Journalists.

Some Information Ministers went as far as drafting a code of ethics for Jordanian Journalists. Dr Ma'en Abu Nawar, for instance, put together 'a code of ethics' in 1993, promising that 'the Ministry of Information will not interfere in the affairs of the press... except in the service of national interests'.

Meanwhile, Mr Mahmoud El Sharif—an ex-minister of information—proposed the formation of a press council in 1992, to act as an arbiter between newspapers and their readers. The idea did not receive much support initially, but the previous government, eventually adopted it, just before its term in office came to an end. The current government reiterated its sup-

port for the idea, but nothing has been done for the past three months, which may suggest that a certain change of mind has occurred.

The code of ethics proposed by the minister of information in 1993 and the idea of a press council which was adopted by the current government do not, however, meet the criteria of self-regulation.

A professional code of ethics for journalists should be formulated by journalists themselves. We could have a professional code of ethics for all Jordanian journalists after prolonged debate with the participation of all journalists. Alternately, we could consider the idea of having a separate code of ethics for each newspaper which should also come about after intensive discussion by all journalists working in a newspaper.

There are, on the other hand, many types of press councils in the world. The press council that was suggested by the government could act as another mechanism to control the press, since the government will appoint its members.

The press council that could help solve the dilemma of boosting press freedom in Jordan without infringing upon people's rights is one that can be described as a "non-governmental, non-media body of citizens that is organized to hear complaints against the media and to evaluate the performance of the media." This council should have no legal authority; its only power is the persuasive impact of its judgments. Parliament should be entrusted with the task of appointing members of this press council.

Important efforts have already been undertaken in Jordan and the Mediterranean region to boost the professional standard of Arab Journalism. The European Union's "Med-Media-Jemstone project" is on the verge of issuing its 'Style-Book' for Arab journalists, which tackles issues related to style and professional pitfalls. This project, which was born as a result of a conversation between the director of the project Mr Tudor Lomas and myself, will help boost the professional standards of Jordanian journalists. It is indeed a welcome contribution to the cause of advancing professional standards in the Jordanian press.

We have spent so much time trying to 'regulate' the press through liberal or restrictive laws. Isn't it time we considered the other option—the enhancement of ethical standards to guarantee a free, responsible press.

The writer whose is the Chief Editor of Ad-Dustour, delivered this lecture at the round-table on "Culture and Communication in the Global Information Society," held in Amman 23-25, 1998.

A view from America

Arafat needs better P.R.

By Carrie Nelle Moye
Star US correspondent

YASIR ARAFAT needs to get a new public relations director. After two decades of attempting to reach a peaceful reconciliation with Israel, after two decades of attempting to get the American public, and thence the United States government, to recognize Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular as something other than terrorists on the ready to maim and slaughter, the goal is within sight.

Even Israel's hawk-cum-peace-maker, Benjamin Netanyahu, has been coerced into coming to terms with his arch enemy and has agreed to the basics of the Wye Plantation agreement. For the first time in modern history, a majority of Americans has begun to at least "question" the long held stereotype of the Palestinian.

And thus as the would-be president of an imminent Palestinian state has nearly outlived

his image, as the man who appeared before the United Nations General Assembly in 1973, wielding a hand-gun, resulting in his banishment from the United States for two decades, Yasser Arafat comes to Washington and meets with the infamous mayor, Marion Berry. What on earth possessed him to do this?

Arafat is an exceedingly intelligent man. His haggard appearance belies his education, his charm, and his intent. He has spent years and millions on rehabilitating his image so as to incur the all-important support of the US populace and government. Just when he is on the precipice of peace, he takes a G-I-A-N-T step backward.

Was this action predicated on a belief that by meeting with a well-known black "leader" he would gain the support of the black minority in America? Or of any other minority? If so, he was grossly misled.

Marion Berry may have

been re-elected mayor. Politics is notoriously fickle. Even so, in a majority of cases, the popular person of the moment wins an election. Berry is the exception that proves the rule. I do not know why or how Berry was elected by his Washingtonian constituents. But I do know that few national leaders of character would be willing to acknowledge Berry as an outstanding leader. Indeed, he could serve as the poster child for the anti-hero, minus any endearing characteristics that might draw many of us to him.

Marion Berry was caught on video tape involved in illegal drug dealings. He came off as the most unsavory of our various political bad boys in the 20th century. He served time in jail. And somehow, known only to persons far more clever than I, he was re-elected as mayor of our capital city.

This is an embarrassment to most of us, no matter our race, no matter our location. For though Washington is an entity unto itself, most of us, as

Americans, feel that as the home of our federal government, it is "our" city. And Marion Berry does not represent most of us.

But Arafat chose to meet with him. Why or how? As one who has been a close witness to the development of Arab/Palestinian-American relations since 1980, I have watched with the greatest of interest this particular slice of history unfold. I have seen acts of Palestinian terrorism being blazoned on the front pages of respected journals while acts of Israeli terrorism were relegated to the back pages of these same journals. And I have seen a decided change in such unbalanced reporting. Attitudes of Americans have changed.

What the Europeans knew long ago, we now are learning: Arabs, like the rest of us are neither all bad nor all good.

Certainly all along we have known this cliché intellectually but we are just now coming to internalize it.

And along comes Arafat and visits Marion Berry. It is almost as though he wants to show "us" that he is nobody's pawn. But he is smarter than that. Or he should be.

Most specialists in Middle Eastern affairs had thought President Bush would be a U.S. President who would truly deal fairly with the Arabs. As former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency he was privy to the facts, as opposed to the fantasy, of the dispossession of the Palestinians. But he did relatively little to differentiate politics from fairness.

Then Clinton took office and against great pressure determined to pursue and enforce peace efforts that mostly had been paid just lip service since the Carter administration.

The Palestinians and Arafat, and by extension the Arab world, has never had the opportunity it now has. So what does Arafat do? Just about the worst thing he could do in the eyes of the American public. And it is not as though Marion Berry stood for anything honorable in the eyes of a respected minority. He does not. Why is Arafat the last person to realize this?

And then there is the question as to what person is being groomed to succeed Arafat. But that's another column.

Food for thought

Mr speaker!

THE ELECTIONS of Abdel Hadi Al Majali to the speakership of the Lower House has come as a great surprise. It was widely expected that Saad Hayel Al Sroor would retain his post as a speaker, after all he has served in that position for the last four years. However, what is even more surprising was the fact that Al Majali wasn't considered as one of the hot favorites.

The fight during the campaign was between Sroor and Ali Abu Ragheb. But things changed on election day last Saturday when the Lower House failed to produce a clear winner in the first round.

Because Saad Hayel Al Sroor and Abdelah Al Akaleh got the least votes in the first round, the fight was open in the second round between Abu Al Ragheb and Al Majali.

At first it appeared neck in neck, but in the end a clear winner was voted in: Al Majali received 42 votes as opposed to the other contender who received 36 votes, a respectable vote. What is clear also is the fact that quite a number of those who voted

for Al Sroor switched their votes to Al Majali. However, the election results are very important and are likely to bring about changes in the leadership of the council and in the way they do things.

This also raises a number of questions about the process of the election. Does it for instance, allow the introduction of change or continuity? One thing is certain however, the roles of being a speaker is an Arab and foreigner, and a Muslim and a Christian. This in itself may have an impact on the national and international relations.

And in this respect, the new National Constitutional Committee, which Al Majali leads, may have found a new window of opportunity to open up national and international relations.

But there is more to the election than meets the eye. The election, who is a leftist, has also been seen as Mr Majali's first deputy speaker.

Middle East Beat

by Khairi Janbek

The foco theory

THE RECENT events in Iran, show the elections of a reforming president in the developing world are not by themselves sufficient to preserve stability. Suddenly crimes of a political nature targeting political figures erupted in Iran, and goodwill delegations started being attacked in the name of keeping certain norms in supremacy.

Since the advent of president Khatami, groups within the elite have resisted the reform programs, that ranges from human rights, women questions, to cultural dialogue. The majority of the Iranian people are in favor of those changes. But there is always a protective minority that tends to be more vocal, and aims to create an unaltered situation in the name of revolutionary purity, and anti-imperialism. It is not easy to carry out reforms amidst threats of violence.

Such a minority would hope to hold any society to its own demands, in this case, Iranians must take the sting away from any potential circumstance that would offer the convenient possibility for any grouping to hold Iranian aspirations and hopes. The rule of law is most essential and the new atmosphere in West-Iran relations must be capitalized on to move away from stereotypes.

Co-existence can be created, if goodwill prevails. President Khatami's battle is with the legacy of recent history, but this can be overturned with enough determination, to incorporate all sectors of Iranian society, into the decision making machinery.

The foco theory has been the invention of left-wing revolutionary politics. It always assumes that a small dedicated minority of revolutionaries, can act as the focus of revolution on behalf of the people. Political anarchists have tried this method in the last century, and in the 20th century; the most successful disciple of the Foco, Lenin managed to overthrow the Russian Empire.

Many later urban terrorists took up the same theory, but met eventually with dismal failure. However, the idea remains attractive for all small scale political oppositionists, and can be used by the ones who shout longer. Failure of such a theory is dependent on public participation in the running of the common interests of the nation, as well as the incorporation of even the most disaffected groups in society.

Acts of political terror and violence will always remain as isolated, when society as whole rejects them as means of solving problems, and resorts to consensus politics as the final arbiter for resolving disputes. socio-political stability, may require also more than public participation. It could require a national organization, with the same commitment to its own ideal as much as the radical rejectionists are committed to theirs.

If small vocal minorities can organize themselves to assume the position of spokespersons of the whole of society, then society must react to protect the sum total of its own interests. It may seem like a strange proposition, but the Foco theory does not necessarily have to remain the domain, of only the oppositionists and revolutionaries.

Obviously, like-minded people exist in all walks of life in every society, and groups of people who have the common interest in preserving the gains made by their collective efforts, can become the Foco of progress and the advocates of freedom and co-existence, it is always repeated that, the silent majority is there, but even the silent majority must free itself from its silence, when the forces of history dictate so.

Business scene

■ The Amman Financial Market went into a new stage of development last week. The AFM weekly bulletin showed that the financial index went up to 162.8, about 4 points more than the week before. The turnover amounted to JD 6.5 million, compared to JD 3.3 million the week before.

■ Jordan exports of medicine exceeded JD 70 million during the first seven months of this year. The amount, however, decreased by 13 percent over the same period last year. Arab countries alone imported more than 97 percent of Jordanian medicine. Jordan's imports of medicine during the same period this year was JD 60 million.

■ The government signed recently a new deal with a bank consortium for a loan of \$110 million. The three-year loan is expected to cover expenses of public institutions for the next year. The loan is an alternative to the government's decision to release international bonds to raise funds.

■ Jordan is currently hosting two economic delegations from the Far East. The delegations, from Korea and China, held various meetings with their Jordanian counterparts and toured most of the economic institutions in the Kingdom, to which they signed agreements with these institutions to increase the economic cooperation between Jordan and the two countries.

■ The Minister of Trade and Industry Mohammed Al-Homazi urged the government to raise the price of the local raw tobacco by 10 percent. The increase came in response to the rising prices of farming. Experts estimate the cost of farming one dunum of tobacco locally is JD 105.

■ The Jordanian Clearance Companies Association (JCCA) made a plea to the Customs Dept., for the high taxes paid for exchanging items on the Jaber border point, between Syria and Jordan. Saleem Jadoun, head of the JCCA, said he received complaints from owners of clearance about the procedure and high taxes they have to pay to the department. He called on the government to intervene and rectify the current situation.

■ Jordan and Algeria signed last week a special agreement to improve tourism between the two countries. The agreement was signed by the Minister of Tourism Akel Bilgi and his Algerian counterpart Abdel Oader Bin Qurina. The objective behind the agreement is to translate the Algerian experience in the tourism field to Jordan.

Lecture on Medicinal Plants at Inter-Con

UNDER THE patronage of HRH Princess Basma, the Friends of Plant Society and Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan are organizing a seminar titled "The Medicinal Plants, A promising Source", on Sunday, 6 December, at 5pm. Dr Ahmad Al-Kofahi, chairman of Medicinal Chemistry and Pharmacognosy Dept. at Jordan University of Science and Technology will deliver the lecture. It will be followed by a cartoon exhibition on the environment. Activities which will take place at Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan will be followed by a reception. ■

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Jordanian-British economic relationship goes into high gear

By Ghassan Joha
Star Staff Writer

THE RECENT visit by British Prince Edward to Jordan, highlights the friendly relations between the two countries. During his three-day visit, Prince Edward inaugurated and participated in a series of cultural and economic events.

On Saturday, the Prince opened the British Design and Packaging Exhibition at the Jordan Inter-Continental Hotel. Prince Edward emphasized the importance of designing, packaging and exporting goods around the world. The Prince also shed light on the economic relationship between the British trading sector and its counterpart in Jordan.

The exhibition, which lasted three days, displayed machinery and trading products produced in Jordan by companies who are agents of British manufacturers. The exhibit also showed equipment used in printing and packaging goods, various items of British food, and books featuring British industries.

Later on the same day, Prince Edward inaugurated "The British Food Week" at the Al-Hilla Abella Stores. Different types of food were displayed for the public, highlighting the quality of British food.

Turning to economic matters, the Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centers Corporation (JEDCO) hosted a special seminar last Sunday, organized under the auspices of Prince Edward and in coordination with the British Institute of Packaging (BIP).

The seminar focused on Jordan's economy, which is considered vulnerable to external



HRH Prince Edward opens the British Food Week in Amman.

photo by G. Kacayun

political factors throughout the Middle East. During the nineties, it was disclosed that trading had become Jordan's second largest income generator, next to tourism, although trading with the Gulf states suffered badly as a direct result of the Gulf war in 1990-91.

However, Jordanian officials were noted for their resilience and an ability to bounce back. Despite many challenges facing the Jordanian trade sector, the prospects of better economic conditions in the future was said to be enough to generate continued optimism.

Mohammed Halaqa, Secretary General of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, opened the seminar with a quick review of economic relations between

Great Britain and Jordan, and he went on to specify the trade deficit between the two countries. "Current rates show that Jordanian exports to Britain are estimated at \$100 million, while Jordan imports have reached as high as \$1 billion from Britain," said Mr Halaqa.

He also emphasized the open-minded policy of the Jordanian trade sector, after the signing of a partnership agreement between Jordan and the European Union. "Jordan, moreover, is looking to join the World Trade Organization soon," added Mr Halaqa.

On his part, Moayyad Samman, assistant director general of JEDCO, said that his corporation is playing an essential role encouraging Jordanian

exporter can ensure a net return through his own business.

"Even with low labor costs, there is no guarantee of success," said Mr McDermott. He stated that any domestic economy depends on the triangle of quality, time and cost. "Tinkering with any one element without due consideration of the other two, will spell business disaster."

Mr McDermott also gave a review on the successful development work. "The World Packaging Organization promotes the concept of three essential parts; a company with a need, a source of funds, and a company with a solution."

Anne Emblem, from the IOP, told the audience to explore the key packaging requirements, essential to support successful product exports to Europe. These requirements can be achieved legally and environmentally. "Every packaging must meet both product and market needs, and must be technically and economically feasible to make, fill, transport, display, sell, use and dispose," said Mrs Emblem.

The seminar continued with a review of packaging as a commercial tool, and gave guidelines for trading with Europe.

Prince Edward left Jordan greatly impressed with the warm welcome he received from the Jordanian people, and he was delighted by the amount of public awareness British economic policies were obtaining in Jordan, and in the Middle East as a whole. ■

Jim McDermott, head of the Training Department at the IOP, explained how the

Palestinian Authority gets \$3 billion boost from abroad

By Barton Gellman

INTERNATIONAL DONORS pledged \$3 billion to the Palestinian Authority last week, a boost that would represent about a quarter of the \$3.3 billion Palestinian economy, which has been in sharp decline since the peace process began. The European Union is the largest overall donor, with pledges of \$2 billion.

President Clinton, who addressed the conference in the State Department auditorium, said the administration is "developing a package" to increase the US contribution by \$400 million over the next five years. The increase, if funded by Congress, would come on top of roughly \$500 million in existing aid plans for the same period.

Monday's international pledges—which could reach \$4 billion over five years if the

donors firm up provisional offers—are nearly equivalent each year to the Palestinian Authority's entire \$860 million budget. On an annual basis they would represent about a quarter of the \$3.3 billion Palestinian economy, which has been in sharp decline since the peace process began. The European Union is the largest overall donor, with pledges of \$2 billion.

Since Israel and the Palestinians reached mutual recognition in September 1993, every Palestinian economic indicator, from employment to per capita income, has crashed. Adjusted for inflation, the gross domestic product was smaller last year than in 1995. The World Bank, in a recent report, attributed much of the decline to Israeli closures of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to movement of people and goods in response to

terrorist attacks.

Clinton said there has been "too little tangible improvement in the lives of the Palestinian people," and alluded to the closures by saying, "Every economy needs a chance to breathe."

Arafat, who also addressed the conference, described Israeli security measures as a "continued siege" and called them the "primary and direct cause for the dangerous decline in the performance of the Palestinian economy over the past five years."

He did not address allegations of cronyism and mismanagement that have surfaced regularly among auditors of Palestinian spending. Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright said that American funds are disbursed directly to projects and that "every dollar is accounted for and it's completely transparent."

World Bank President James D. Wolfensohn, noting increased international efforts to monitor Palestinian spending, said in a brief interview, "I think we've tied it much tighter on project control."

The United States has spent \$375 million in direct aid and financed \$125 million in loan guarantees since the last such donor conference in October 1993, which produced \$2.1 billion in aid for the Palestinian economy. Most of the American funding went to build housing and roads, using Palestinian labor to boost employment, but the larger part of the international contribution went to "budgetary support"—making

up for chronic and sometimes desperate shortfalls in Arafat's ability to meet the Palestinian public payroll.

"Under current plans, according to World Bank officials, Palestinians will finance their recurring budget through tax revenues, and most capital spending will come from abroad."

"The money is good, and the general feeling and support is good," said Palestinian Planning Minister Nabil Shaath, reflecting a jubilant mood in Arafat's delegation. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Mr. Ismail Al-Hassan, the newly appointed General Manager of Holiday Inn Hotels Middle East and Africa for the year 1998. A special ceremony was held in Amsterdam/Holland on 26 November during which Mr. Ravi Sahasrabudhe, president of Holiday Inn International, presented Mr. Hassan with the award.

AMMAN (The Star)—His Royal Highness Prince Faisal has opened last Sunday the Fifth Conference of the Middle East Air Navigation Planning and Implementation Regional Group. The meeting, which lasted for five days, is organized by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and in cooperation with the Jordanian Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Over 15 countries from the Middle East took part in the conference, in addition to participants from the USA, Britain, France, Cyprus and international organizations concerned with the air aviation.

The meeting focused on the required safety measures in the air transport sector.

Prince Faisal delivered the opening speech, outlining the

Business Chronicle

Going down!

IT'S GOOD news for the economy. Latest figures show that the trade deficit in the balance of payments is slowly narrowing for the first eight months of this year. The 2.4 percent decline means that the relation between exports and imports is becoming healthier.

Figures showed that this year's deficit is estimated at JD one billion, compared with JD 1.011 billion for the same period last year.

However, there is more than meets the eye. The Kingdom's exports so far this year are nearly JD 700 million, a good enough figure, but it is 5.4 percent lower than the same period last year.

There could be many reasons for this, but the main one has to do with quality and the need to conform to international standards.

Many Arab and foreign countries have often expressed their disapproval of Jordanian goods, something which badly affects revenues and hits the local market with unexpected inflation.

Official records show that the Jordanian re-exported goods amounted JD 144.3 million, an additional decrease on last year's figure which was JD 153 million.

The issue has come at a time as the government gears up to publish its annual budget for 1999.

Analysts also state that the raising prices of international commodities and the need to find alternative markets may have contributed to the decline in exports.

As the world prepares to enter the new millennium, Jordan seems to be lacking behind to meet the requirements of the world economy.

However, the narrowing of the trade gap has meant a reduction in imports by four percent. Still its import bill was in the region of JD 1.8 billion.

The reduction in imports is an encouraging trend, for it means that there is light at the end of the tunnel and that Jordanian industry may be becoming buoyant again. Obviously, the notion of self-sufficiency is still a long way off, but it means that across the board local industry can compete on the same level with international products and goods. Now the question is how far could such industry improve? This is something that requires tremendous amount of self-discipline, vigor, and dynamism on the part of the industrialists themselves to export. ■

Air transport under the spotlight in Amman



main aspects of the air transport industry. The Prince also spoke about the Chicago Convention, which signed in 1944 by 52 countries, and remains the basis governing aviation. Now, over 185 members and countries joined the ICAO.

Prince Faisal stated that there are real challenges facing the transport industry. He pointed out that safety measures are the most wanted in dealing with such challenges on the threshold of the next century.

"The Middle East is on a strategic crossroads between Asia, Africa and Europe," said Prince Faisal. He stated that number of air flights has increased by eight folds, flying over 1.5 billion passengers worldwide.

Jasser Ziad, director-general of the CAA, later assured the audience on His Majesty King Hussein's concern for the Jordanian civil aviation. He also defined air transport as ideal for world cooperation.

The organizers say the main objective of the conference—the first of its kind in Jordan—is to

organize air navigation and flight routes around the world, and the Middle East in particular. The ICAO is responsible over seven international regions.

In 1993, a group of eight Middle East countries was formed to plan and implement air navigation measures in the region. These are Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Discussion focused on the national schemes of the participating countries in dealing with the future air aviation, and the expected influence of the Middle Eastern navigation on the international field. The international growing concern of the Year 2000 Crisis, was also highlighted in the conference, where world computers are expected to be affected by the so-called "millennium bug."

The conference elected Rajae Al Rifaie, chief adviser of the CAA, as its chairman for the current session which lasts for the next five years. ■

Improving local business through outside help

AMMAN (Star)—The Jordan Export Development Corporation and Trade Centers (JEDCO) currently serves the local representative of five international organizations.

Over 70 industrial companies have benefited from these organizations in the past two years. JEDCO offers the foreign experts services about Jordanian companies and institutions who are in need of economic advice. This is part of a program that JEDCO set up recently.

One of the objectives behind this scheme is to transfer skills and foreign knowledge to emerging economies, by providing a hands-on training and expertise advice.

These organizations combine in one group from France, Netherlands, Germany, Great Britain, and Italy.

They highly assign qualified senior advisers to Jordanian companies and corporations, and share with them the required experience at no financial return.

JEDCO deputy director, Moayyad Samman told The Star that these services are available to any small or medium projects, covering both the private and public sectors.

"The main work of those experts is to give Jordanian companies the best advice of how to upgrade their technologies, to improve ways of earning power, to increase their efficiency and to decrease unemployment," said Mr Samman.

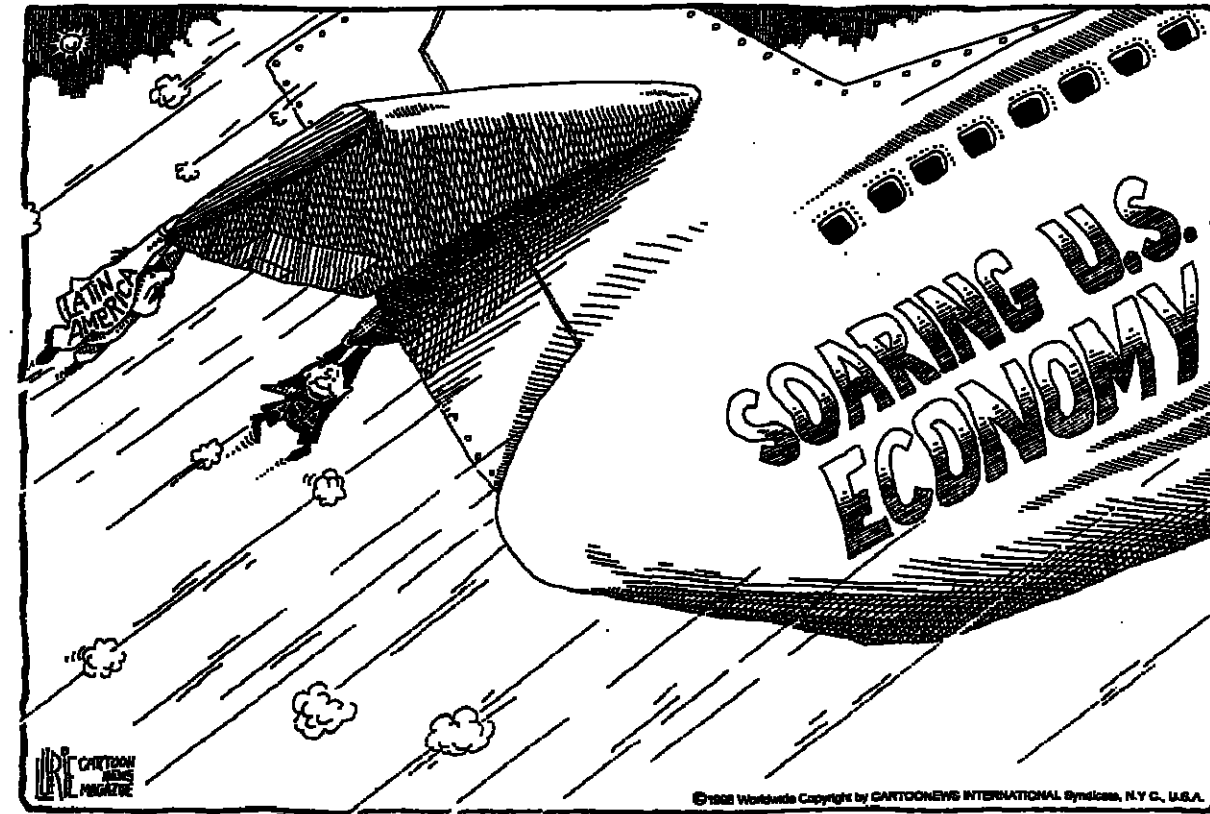
Other facilities afforded by these organizations can be obtained in helping to identify the appropriate markets for

exporting and importing goods, and to assist in encouraging partnerships.

Mr Samman said those interested must meet a set criteria to obtain the services. "Any company must pick up an application form from JEDCO, and wait for the response by the service provider, who will review the application and coordinate with the applied company on the needed preparations." For the cost, Mr Samman assured that every organization has its own requirements.

He concluded by saying that with this program, which is the first of its kind in Jordan, both economic and industrial sectors are expected to improve their business conditions, and the developing companies will improve their quality of employment and self-help. ■

Lurie's NewsCartoon



"Boy... aren't we lucky we found a ride!"

'Sareer Al Gharibah' Poetical myths of Mahmoud Darwish



France, Jordan and Palestine. ■

Shirley Koecher was a quixotic philosopher obsessed with the paranoiacal.

The last interest lost him intellectual credibility at a time when his book was becoming less relevant to a large degree because the message had been put down so completely, trampled by the tragedy and horror with which the rest of the world in the 1940s, and Koecher's virulently, in this refugee decade, was writing the first three in three different languages: *The Gladiators* (1939) in Hungarian, *Darkness at Noon* in German and *Arrival and Departure* in English. It is hard to imagine today.

Cesarine dwells far too long on the efforts of Koecher, and pines through the physical, Czaroboyan years in elephantine pain. Serious allegations, particularly of rape, lost momentum by being jumbled in with mourning waffle about one might waste and drink. Of the subject of this life, no personality at all, even a tabloid editor's bogeyman, steps off the page while hanging over the whole collection, is that British suspicion of the intellectual against which Koecher fought so hard. ■

The homeless mind

Life's victory over the shutter of death

By Holly Finn

WHEN PHOTOGRAPHER John Dugdale set off alarms in The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York a few years ago, it wasn't a form of artistic protest. He simply failed to realize he was peering too closely at the paintings, or reaching too near a sculpture's foot he had just become almost completely blind.

After a stroke in 1993, Dugdale lost nearly all his sight, save for a tiny crescent of blurry peripheral vision at the bottom of his left eye. He still takes photographs, though, of scenes he can no longer see at least literally. He outfits his damaged eyes by using an internal sense of how things look to create a picture, assistants help to focus the camera. "I just have to be clever," he says.

Dugdale has learned how to be a blind person, listening to books on tape to master a new set of manners (never let your head sink towards the plate when you eat, always look straight at the person you are talking to so they don't become uncomfortable). He has also learned how to be a person with Aids.

It was HIV, that prompted his stroke five years ago, and now prompts him to take a cocktail of anti-viral drugs 40 pills every day. Nearly two decades after the emergence of HIV, Dugdale, like millions of others, just has to be clever about it.

At the 1996 Vancouver International Conference on Aids, discussion of new treatments, protease inhibitors was widely interpreted as promising a cure. In the same year, Newsweek ran a cover story titled "The End of Aids?" But it is now clear that the epidemic has not ended. According to the United Nations Program on Aids (UNAIDS), 33.4 million people are infected worldwide and 90 per cent of those don't know they are. By 2000, 40 million will be living with the virus.

This year's World Aids day is on Tuesday, sponsored by UNAIDS, and will aim events and education at young people and the need for vigilance. "This is just a back of the envelope calculation, but I estimate that 100 million young people become sexually active every year," says Peter Piot, executive director of UNAIDS and assistant secretary-general of the United Nations. "The prevention effort will never stop. 7,000 people aged between 15 and 24 are infected with HIV every day, that's five every minute, according to UNAIDS."

In the US, many people with Aids are concerned that the public, in its eagerness for the disease to disappear, is developing its own blindness. Last month, President Clinton declared Aids a health-care crisis in minority communities and pledged a further \$156 million for prevention, treatment and training.

But from the private sector, there is no corresponding flow of funds. At a time when private giving to non-profit organizations increased by 7 per cent in each of the past two years, funding for Aids groups in particular has declined severely.

Skewed perceptions of Aids are difficult to shift. In a recent telephone survey of 1,700 heterosexual Americans, conducted by the University of California at Davis, 27 per cent of respondents said they "would be less likely to wear a sweater that had been worn one time by a person with Aids than if it had been worn by another person."

Some continue to doubt the virus altogether. Continuum, a magazine "by the living for the living," published in the UK, suggests that "the link between 'HIV' and 'Aids' has never been more than hypothetical." Peter Duesberg at the University of California Berkeley persists in his long-held view that "Aids is neither an infectious epidemic nor caused by HIV."

But people with Aids don't bother debating its existence. Instead, they analyze their own existence. For example, December 1 is also the 10th annual Day With (Out) Art, an observance organized by a group called Visual Aids that highlights the contributions artists with Aids have made and the ones they won't make if they're dead. As part of his contribution, John Dug-

dale will be at the Museum of Modern Art in New York to launch The Virtual Collection, the first digital database of works by 200 artists with HIV/Aids, drawn together from archives across the country.

Dugdale also has a new show, entitled "Nature and Spirit," running in New York and opening in London next week. It is a collection of pictures unusual not only because you see what the photographer could not, you are also seeing pictures that are not Kodachrome and are not black and white.

They are cyanotypes which follow a process invented in 1842 that relies on the light sensitivity of iron salts. The results are blue and white images that look like "a mass of old photos and dropped them in a vat of cobalt."

"Your sight does not come from your eyes, it comes from your brain," says Dugdale, whose portraits, still lifes and landscapes help explain the difference between taking and making a photograph. The first is what most of us do: see something and snap it. The second is what Dugdale does. He envisages the scene and makes it happen.

It seems unfathomable to people to be a visual artist who can't see," says Dugdale. "But Beethoven was deaf. Galileo went totally blind working on some of his most important formulas about the stars."

Dugdale is 38 now, and lives on the top floor of a townhouse in the West Village in New York City. He is tall and dark with smooth olive skin and a gently lifting voice.

In a self-portrait in his new show he seems much the same, but somehow even more imposing. He is seen at Lacock Abbey in England, sitting against the gravestone of William Henry Fox Talbot (the inventor of the

negative in 1835), and looks noble, determined. His shoulders are almost as broad as the gravestone. It is, notably, not a picture of death.

People with Aids are, as Dugdale is, going back to work, and Survival (Alfred A. Knopf, \$23), Andrew Sullivan writes: "It is true and truer now than even six months ago that something profound in the history of Aids has occurred these last two years... It no longer signifies death. It merely signifies illness."

At least in western countries, where people are increasingly living with Aids rather than dying of it, this shift to the sanguine is both a joy and a shock. Asked about the effect of this shift, Sullivan allows that "It is somewhat disorienting for this disease to take its place among other diseases."

Anthony Fauci, director of the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, estimates that over the past two decades, 60 million people have died from tuberculosis, between 40 million and 60 million people from malaria, and 11 million from Aids.

But Aids' continuing, often covert, capacity for damage is enormous. Though HIV can be treated to the point where it becomes undetectable in the blood, the virus remains, says Fauci, "very recalcitrant, stubborn, persistent" in other reservoirs of the body. It is always potentially infectious. And people with it are learning to live longer and more active lives.

Dugdale is gay and some of his pictures feature naked men, but his new show is not about being gay, just as it is not about having Aids or being blind, though it is colored by all three. He is an activist primarily by being active. His prints of a "Paris Porcelain Teapot" will be sold for \$1,000 each to benefit the Elton John Aids Foundation. "As a collector of master paintings and 20th century photography," the singer says, "I am astonished to find someone who can effortlessly combine the two genres."

His cyanotypes are not exclusive, and neither, any more, is the infection once known as "the gay disease". From 1981 to 1996, the proportion of newly reported US Aids cases accounted for by men who have sex with men, including those who inject drugs, decreased from 64 to 44 per cent. The proportion of newly reported cases accounted for by people infected heterosexually increased from 3 to 13 per cent, according to the Center for Disease Control.

There is still no vaccine. Optimistic

estimates for the development of one expect it to take between seven and 10 years. Meanwhile, the developing world is far worse off than it was five years ago. Two-thirds of people infected with HIV live in Africa south of the Sahara, and the virus keeps spreading. "India is going to be the next epi-center," warns Fauci.

In the developed world, existing treatments are a salve, not a cure. Protease inhibitors are no panacea. "If there's one big scary story that came out of Geneva [venue for the annual World Aids conference this year], it's that there is multi-drug resistant HIV," says Greg Lugliani of Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York. Existing therapies cannot treat those in whom resistant strains have developed.

"I was one of the guinea pigs," says Spencer Cox, director of the anti-viral project at the Treatment Action Group in New York. He developed a resistance to his drugs within a year after he started taking them in 1994. He now admits, with hindsight: "I should have waited much longer to start treatment." He hopes that today's clinical trials will produce something that might manage his virus.

Even when drugs do work they often have side-effects, some taste of a liquid anti-viral called Norvir, which Lugliani recommends chasing with globs of Skipppy Honey Nut Superchunk peanut butter. Lipodystrophy, a redistribution of fat in the body, is a freaky side-effect of certain protease inhibitors. It causes "puppet face" (wasting of the face), "protease punch" (thickening of the mid-section) and "buffalo hump" (fatty deposits behind the neck and on the shoulders).

John Dugdale has suffered from none of these. He appears in many of his own photographs, as clear-skinned and as ideally proportioned as an Olympic rower. You can't see his disease, he hasn't been overwhelmed by it. He's a prime example of its livability.

Adherence to the prescribed drug regimen is crucial, not only for stabilizing the system but for preventing a build-up of resistance. Many people with Aids find it difficult sticking to such an intricate schedule taking this handful of pills on an empty stomach, that handful on a full stomach, another 40 pills for life.

Some, calling themselves "drug-naïve," simply refuse to take medication until their health nose dives and it's absolutely necessary.

"I don't object to taking these drugs, it's the timing," says Mark Niedzolkowski, the founder of People With Aids Health Group. He criticizes "the old American attitude of if a little is good why not take a lot. If that's good, why not take it earlier." Dugdale thinks the stand-off approach is foolish. "I've seen so many people die in that frame of mind."

The photographer is diligent about taking his cocktail. He is planning for his next show "about my progenitors and my siblings" and asking himself: "How could I really look at them, even harder, more intimately?"

He does not dwell on the possibility of getting his physical eyesight back, though he sometimes imagines it, naturally, as a picture: "A camera with the aperture closing first, then opening."

For now, his view is clear enough. "For Christ's sake," he says, "just take the drugs and get on with it."

Financial Times Syndication



Two women speak with salesmen as they survey home goods in a Tehran market 29 November. President Khatami presented the annual budget to parliament on Sunday, warning that Iran faces tough economic times ahead. Reuters

Iran: no. 1 safe haven for world's Muslim refugees

By John Daniszewski

TEHRAN—Which country is the most magnanimous toward refugees? Not Sweden, Canada, Switzerland or the United States.

Although not generally regarded in the West as a charitable country, Iran now and for most of the past two decades has provided safe haven to more refugees than any other nation. Afghans, Tajiks, Azeris and Iraqi Arabs and Kurds have sought shelter here, escaping civil war, insecurity and oppression in their homelands.

In most cases, the refugees are not sequestered in camps but are allowed to live and work alongside Iranians. Many attend schools and a few even attend universities.

Instances of discrimination and abuse of refugees have occurred, and their numbers may be on the rise, according to media accounts and refugee activists. But overall, Iranian treatment of more than 2 million refugees appears commendable.

"Iran, believe it or not, outlaw of the world has over the last 10 years been the most generous asylum country in the world," Soren Jensen-Peterson, assistant high commissioner of the United Nations refugee agency, noted last year.

"He praised Iran for being in the forefront 'not only in terms of numbers but in the way' refugees are integrated into society."

Despite its willingness to shoulder the burden of refugees, Iran gets little credit and only limited financial aid from the international community. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) budgeted \$17 million this year for programs in Iran, and donor nations have been slow to come up with even that.

In contrast, in the former Yugoslavia federation, where UNHCR is faced with fewer than 1 million displaced people, governments have contributed \$149 million this year alone, as UN member states increasingly earmark donations for particular refugee crises.

"Iran complains that it does not get a large enough share of the pie, considering the number of refugees here," said Pierre Bertrand, program director for UNHCR in Iran, who voices concern that the Iranians' patience may be running out.

That is a concern because the tide of refugees shows signs of rising again as more Shiite Muslims flee Afghanistan's strict Sunni Muslim regime, which denies women and girls an education and the right to work.

As part of Iranian President Mohammad Khatami's policy of more openness to the world, his nation is hoping for greater international assistance to help it cope with refugees. Khatami's government argues that caring for them is one field in which Iran and the West can cooperate.

Such cooperation might be more likely if the refugees here were not so invisible in the West—a situation caused in part by Iran's past isolation and by the physical remoteness of Afghanistan, where civil war has put more than 1 million people to flight far from the attention of the world.

Recently the cash-strapped Iranian government has become reluctant to accept new refugees, said Morteza Sheikhzadeh, an Afghan political activist. Newcomers—some of whom get into Iran with the help of smugglers charging \$1,000 a person—have no chance to get green cards, which means they face the threat of arrest and deportation.

Furthermore, without legal status, newly arrived refugees cannot seek work permits or send their children to Iranian schools. But authorities still tend to look the other way when they see refugees crossing into Iran and working illegally.

Iran first began absorbing large numbers of refugees in the late 1970s, with the outbreak of civil war in Afghanistan and a Kurdish rebellion in northern Iraq. Over the past two decades, war ebbed and flowed across those two countries, and each new outbreak of fighting brought a

new wave of people seeking refuge here. Fighting in October 1996 between the two main Kurdish factions in northern Iraq caused 65,000 Kurds to flee to Iran in a single month.

According to the UNHCR, the total refugee population in Iran is 2.1 million, down from 4.5 million in the early 1990s. In addition to the Afghans, there are about 600,000 Iraqis. Refugees of other nationalities—Tajiks, Bosnians, Azeris, Eritreans and Somalis—make up the rest.

About 25,000 Afghans and 65,000 Iraqis are cared for in refugee camps, according to Bertrand of the UNHCR. But most refugees fend for themselves. They find jobs as domestic workers or cheap laborers, mainly in construction and agriculture.

Bertrand said at its peak the Afghan refugee population in the country was 3 million. About half those voluntarily were repatriated between 1992 and 1995, after the fall of Afghanistan's Marxist government seemed briefly to herald the return of peace. But repatriations have slowed to a trickle; just 1,400 refugees have returned so far this year.

The Afghans who remain in Iran are mainly ethnic Hazaras. They are Shiite Muslims, like their Iranian hosts, and fear persecution in Afghanistan at the hands of Sunni Muslims of the ruling Taliban regime. The Taliban deny that Shites are harmed because of religious differences. Many Hazaras are skeptical, however, especially after

hundreds of Shites reportedly were massacred this summer after the fall of their northern stronghold, Mazar-i-Sharif.

A group of Iranian diplomats and journalists also were murdered during the takeover of the stronghold, sparking anti-Afghan riots in the city of Esfahan, dozens of Afghans reportedly were stabbed and beaten, despite a government appeal for restraint.

"The Afghan people and refugees are caught between two Taliban," complained Sheikhzadeh, the political activist. "One Taliban is in Afghanistan and are killing Afghans who are Shites. The other

is in Iran and is unfairly judging our people because of their (Shite) diplomats."

There are other indignities as well, but most refugees interviewed said they were happy to be in Iran.

"It is much better than in Afghanistan. At least we have bread to eat," said Fatimeh Hadari, 38, as she waited at the UNHCR office with her youngest son, hoping to receive financial help for medical treatment. Part of the reason Iranians have been so generous about admitting refugees is that the first big waves came at the same time that Iran itself was in the throes of its revolution.

Its borders were more or less open, especially to Shites from Iraq and Afghanistan seen as sympathetic to the cause.

Welcoming fellow Muslims was viewed as in keeping with the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's vision of a worldwide Islamic revolution—one based on religion, not nationalism. Then came the nation's 1980-88 war with Iraq, and Iran was willing to admit Kurds and Iraqi Arabs fleeing Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's regime.

"For Iranians, it was considered an Islamic duty to give refuge to people who had launched a 'jihad' (holy war) against a foreign invader," Bertrand said of the Afghan refugees.

After 20 years, the country's welcome may be becoming strained, admits the UNHCR official. And it is anyone's guess whether the welcome mat will be pulled in.

For now, though, among people whose profession is to ease the plight of refugees around the world, Iran remains a country that is spoken of in tones of respect.

"Iran absolutely deserves credit," said Groves, the UNHCR spokeswoman. By accepting so many refugees and absorbing their costs itself, "Iran is one of the most hospitable countries in the world."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

The fine line between killing and culling

By Joe Rogaly

MERCY KILLING is becoming unmerciful. What was once left to the discretion of sympathetic doctors is trumpeted as a right. The assumption that physicians should do everything possible to prolong life is questioned.

In certain circumstances, they might be expected to hasten a patient's demise. The next step can only be to bring what Americans call "assisted suicide" within the law.

It makes no difference whether this happens next year or a decade from now. The medical practitioners of the 21st century will offer death as a consumer choice. The popular mood, reflected in newspapers and the electronic media, is propelling us in that direction. What was for merely left unsaid is now shouted out loud.

Last Sunday, Jack Keavorkian was shown on American television putting an end to the life of Thomas Youk. The short film, which was aired on the CBS Sunday evening documentary program 60 Minutes, was clearly regarded by Dr

Keavorkian as a boost to his campaign to legalize euthanasia.

The doctor has been charged with first-degree murder. He must be delighted. We are in for a globally televised public debate. Snuffing out lives comes second only to sex as a guaranteed booster of ratings. The outcome is not in doubt: two steps forward for the argument, so eloquently propounded by the right-to-death brigade.

It is true that Mr. Youk, a sufferer from a degenerative nerve illness, twice signed a letter of authorization and repeatedly nodded his assent to the procedure. If his condition was, as depicted, incurable, it would have been cruel to deny him his evident wish.

He or his family might even have wanted to allow a TV show to be made of it. If so, it was open to CBS to let the opportunity pass it by. That would have been a superhuman act of self-denial. A Dutch euthanasia film, "Death on Request," was shown on ABC's Primetime Live four years ago. But one lapse of taste does not justify another.

These stories are not reass-

uring. They speak of an erosion of trust in the medical profession. The database also tells of the example of the Northern Territory in Australia, where assisted suicide was for a while legal. Doubt has since been cast over some of the diagnoses which led patients to ask for their lives to be ended.

Undaunted, proponents of laws that would protect practitioners who assisted the suicides of terminally ill patients have popped up in the Belgian senate, the French ministry of health, and several US states. They do not always get their way. Voters in Michigan, the home of Dr Keavorkian, have decisively rejected such a proposition.

In the latter case, pro-life campaigners, originally brought together to oppose abortion, worked mightily to defeat the suggested new law. The state's seven bishops wrote to every Roman Catholic household to advocate a negative vote. If Dr Keavorkian gets his euthanasia debate going he will have the religious right and the Catholic church arguing against legal-

ization. That would amount to a powerful opposition.

Those of us who belong to neither group can look at their arguments dispassionately. What the pro-life case boils down to is this: if you permit mercy killing you dull medical sensibilities, cheapen life, put pressure on elderly and confused patients, tempt relatives to agree to the "easy" choice, perhaps even lay the groundwork for the culling of geriatrics.

The pro-lifers derive their argument from their experience of legalized abortion. What started as something designed to treat women whose health was threatened by their pregnancies became widespread, a matter of personal choice. They have a point, do they not? Possibly, but it has to be set against the inhumanity of "letting nature take its course" in every case.

My own position is that every case is special. Sometimes hastening death is justifiable, sometimes not. We should let trusted doctors quietly do it, as they always have, but keep the law out of it.

03.11.1998

AROUND TOWN



Mabrouk!

Dr Nabeel Al Sherif, chief editor of *Ad Dustour*, was blessed with boy twins, Tariq and Hashim, on Wednesday 25 November 98. Mr Sherif and his wife were visited by HRH Princess Sumayah and her husband Nasser Jodeh, minister of information. The couple also received a call from HRH Prince Hassan Bin Zeid. A number of women from Arab and foreign diplomatic corps also paid the couple a visit. Dr Al Sherif has already three children: Nadda (15), Yara (11) and Wajood (8).



OFF THE WALL

By Rana Haddad

Lies, lies and more lies

HOW MANY of us can say with hand on heart that they have never lied? Why is it that we often in our lives, and what benefit do we get from it? There are many different types of lies, and we all have our own way of concealing them.

Imagine a whole day without lying. Can it be done, I wonder? Your friend telephones you, and after talking about her problems for an hour, she says "sorry, I must be boring you," to which you answer, "Oh, no. Of course not." Or your friend turns up with a new hair style, and despite the fact that it shows off her big ears, you say "wow, it looks great."

Small or white lies dominate our lives, and they are often so spontaneous that we tend to forget that we say them a lot. How many times have you started a conversation with words of flattery? We think that lies make our life easier, and sometimes we lie to avoid trouble, or to please and to impress. Sometimes we say things because we know that the person wants to hear it.

Lying is a verbal coin through which we buy time. Often, it is more economical to say a small lie, rather than spend hours arguing with someone about a fact which may cause controversy.

In fact, lying has become a habit. Our everyday life is made up of them, to such an extent that when we want to say the truth, we have to start our sentence with a prologue like "Frankly speaking," or "I am sorry but..."

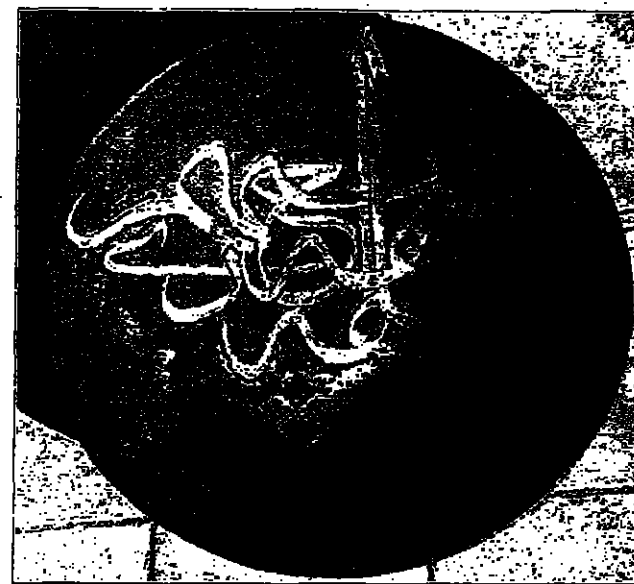
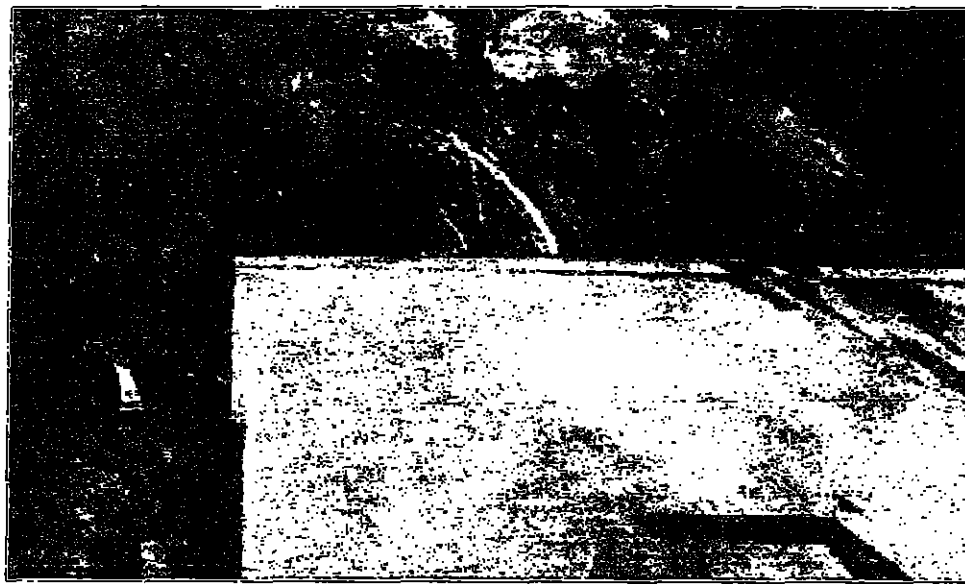
Lies have many forms. They can be good or bad, strong or weak, and pleasing or hurtful. Lies can wound a person, and corrupt a nation. Our parents teach us from the very beginning not to lie, but we all know that it is very hard to practice what they preach.

The success of a lie depends on the skill of the liar and the victim's innocence. The skilled liar learns how to control his body language so as not to give away the lie. Only the very best liars can get away with this. Normally, there are tell tale signs that a lie has been made—physical clues like irregular movements of hands and legs, or turning the eyes away from someone's stare.

We humans have even come to enjoy lying. All I ask is that please make them "white lies," which have no real effect or impact on those around us.



<http://star.arabia.com>



Modern Arab art at a glance

By Kofi Attah
Special to The Star

ART IS the buzzword of communication. Paintings have become vital as a form of interaction in a rapidly moving world. Today, it is the visual images that speak out. They disseminate the message as fast as light.

In contemporary Arab societies, visual art has come to occupy a crucial place in the field of creativity and intellectual exploration. The emergence of this new mode of pictorial expression adopted by the Arabs has brought about numerous changes since the beginning of the century, and led to the concept of modernism.

Today, art has a significant role in the study of the sources of creativity in present Arab societies at every level, that include the aesthetic and ideological. The artist, as an individual creator with a specific style and mode of expression, has sought to drive his message across to his audience and all those interested in art.

Irrefutably, Arab art is expressed in a visual language, emanating from the interdependence of various cultures which are born from the movement of different people from the world. The combined cultural influence of Europe, Africa and Asia has reflected sophistication and adornment.

It is therefore appropriate for Darat Al Funun to display the works of selected contemporary Arab artists as part of its decade of existence. The 10th anniversary celebration exhibition features, photography, paintings, sculpture and ceramics. Forty-seven different artists with 47 very different approaches to their works—most of them combine in their works the influence of East and West.

There are many artists, Jordanian and others, whose exile outside their countries has impact on their works. They give prominence to scenes taken from social life and historical events by means of figurative signs.

The Jordanian artist, Nabil Shehadeh lives in Sweden, his native Jordan has inspired most of his abstract paintings. Others such as the Syrian Marwan Kasab Bachli, who lives in Berlin translates his profound sensibilities, beyond any form of mimesis and reveals his human experiences in an irresistible manner.

The exhibition under the theme, "The 10th Anniversary of Contemporary Arab Artists" is loaded with painters whose recent works extend a decade's enquiry into the passionate relation of the abstract

and reality, in which the intimate is as much in the frame as the great political and social events that shape them.

Other artists include the Palestinian Vladimir Tamari. His native Jerusalem has inspired many of his water colors. On the other hand, the Jordanian

his generation. "My paintings are musical" he says. During the 1993 Jerash musical festival he went on stage to synchronize his 2m x 1m paintings with the on-going music that thrilled many musical fans at the concert.

Some of the artists find their inspiration in popular imagery. This is found in the visual universe of the Tunisian Gouder Triki whose works are based on the poetical elements of the image. The Moroccan Muhammad Kacim and the Egyptian Adam Heneti who paint scenes with a great liberty of interpretation, all adopt a signifying figuration.

The exhibition is a single unity devoted to Arab art. The works of 21 artists are seen in the blue house and the rest of the 26 are displayed in the lower halls of the foundation where video screen shows the many exhibitions Darat Al Funun has devoted to the innovative Arab artists. Two giant boards, all impressive, green, blue and yellow colors, which display various pictures of figures.

Darat Al Funun is dedicated to promoting contemporary creativity in the widest sense, bringing various forms of artistic expression together and relating creation and form to each other. In 10 years of intense activity, it has become an essential venue for those interested in contemporary arts.

The contemporary venue assembles various Arab artists living in different parts of the world in a context that modern Arab arts are evolved. Though it is difficult to give an inventory of all the approaches since the very beginning, it has vividly revealed the creative dynamism of ideas underlying modern Arab culture.

Finally it demonstrates what can be attained through individuals. This can be seen through the works of Ammar Khammash, a painter and an architect, who helped in the renovating works of Darat Al Funun. Or the Sudanese who has specialized in graphic arts and who now lives and teaches arts in the USA.

Organizations and cultures working together. The 10th Anniversary Exhibition of Contemporary Arab artists continues till 28 January 1999 at all the exhibition halls of Darat Al Funun, in Jabel Al Weibdeh.



Rafiq Lahham is much influenced by his surroundings which he portrays in his etchings. However, it is to the Assistant Director of Darat Al Funun, that particular attention must be paid. Adnan Sharif is a painter with a talent far beyond

ing together.

'Windows and Doors'

Hani Hourani's vision of the past

By Ghassan Joha
Star Staff Writer

HISTORY IS associated with images that brings the past into life. Jordanian artist Hani Hourani recently opened a unique photography exhibition at the Baladna Art Gallery in Wasfi Al Tal Street. "Windows and Doors" simply narrates history through photography.

The exhibit, opened under the patronage of Amman's Mayor Nidal Al Hadeed, displays 76 large and middle-size photos of old and traditional buildings from various corners of the Arab world.

The objective is to uncover the past while integrating the present, to pursue reality without depriving the images of their historic values.

The combination of interpretations that are visible in these photos portray the abstract cultural aspect of old buildings which date back to many years. The artist takes us on a ritual trip of traditions in north Africa and the Middle East.

Hourani concentrates on the traditional atmosphere of history by using important details such as antique doors and windows.

His current exhibit is consid-

ered unique because it displays pictures of monuments that no longer exist. These monuments use doors to venture into the past and windows to foresee the present and future. Doors are mainly made of either wood or metal creating a vivid scene in each photo of different buildings. Windows on the other hand, invite us inside homes through the reflection of the penetrating light.

Shadows of old doors and arches in Tunisia and Morocco add a touch of liveliness to the pictures.

Windows, however, are portrayed in different shapes and styles holding within them all the secrets of the past in an association with the present.

Egyptian oriels which are windows projecting from the walls and supported by corbels or brackets, introduce a unique style filled with Arabesque ornaments spread over the surrounding area. This kind of windows were common during the Islamic and Ottoman periods.

Churches and mosques are also featured. These sacred places force an atmosphere of holiness and secrecy represented in bell-towers and minarets.



Photo by Mahmoud Shawki

dent in his work, since they draw the viewer to the roots in which the truth lies and history preserves its sacred values. The exhibition also sheds light on the significance of the house as a vital element for social relations.

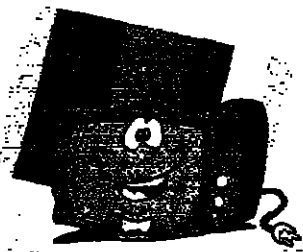
Hani Hourani held his first exhibition in 1996 in Baladna

Gallery which paved the way for further shows around the Kingdom. Born in 1945 in Zarqa, Hourani obtained a bachelors degree in 1970 in Political Science from the University of Jordan. He pursued photography courses at the Lebanese Ministry of Information in Beirut in 1974 and in

Moscow in 1975. The artist has been the director of the New Jordan Center, since 1992.

The artist chose to hold his current exhibition at Baladna Gallery to pay tribute to the House that gave him his first opportunity. "Windows and Doors" runs till 18 December.

ON THE BOX



The headmaster

By Ibtihal Ahmad
Special to The Star

THE "SONS OF Mr Headmaster," currently shown on JTV's Arabic channel, is not the kind of program we expect to see a famous actor such as Kamel Al Shinnawi take part in. For he starred in many movies, and in most of these, he was the young, ambitious and at times, macho Egyptian male. However, Al Shinnawi's mature role as an educator and father was perfected, proving that he is just as good in television soaps as he once was on the silver-screen.

Co-starring with him is the enchanting Lyta Al Taber, and unlike him, she is much experienced in TV soaps, for she has been in television series for most of her acting career. However, she is new to the role of the timid housewife who has no worries in the world but to provide comfort for her family. This is because in her earlier soaps, she was accustomed to the role of an educator, business woman and the strong-willed independent lady who lets nothing stand in her way.

The series has many important messages to convey to the viewers. It's main concern is the economic situation in Egypt, an issue reflected in most Arab countries, which forces many young men and women to take up jobs they would never think of doing if they had decent well-paid occupations, or even if they were employed in the first place.

It also tackles the dilemma of the newly weds, or those engaged to be married. This section has a heavy responsibility, mainly that of finding suitable living quarters for their families. Because starting a new life is rather expensive, they end up being engaged for a very long time.

The sons of the headmaster—also the title of the drama—were raised on virtue and respect, but they were forced to take up jobs their father thought were detestable. To say the least, their father was disappointed at his sons' choice of work, but he becomes even more frustrated when his eldest decides to start his singing career in a sleazy night club with a belly dancer at his side, singing the silliest tunes one could think of.

To add to the drama, the owner of the club, who is old enough to be his mother, in order to further his musical career. The series is a reflection on reality, for the new wave of Arab songs have neither meaning, nor originality, mixing the western with the oriental and hence giving the songs a rather muffled identity.

The headmaster's problems are doubled when his second son is approached by a gangster, and lured to work with the latter's bosses under false pretences. Indeed, viewers wonder about the naivety and even stupidity of the boy who was blinded by money and glamour, which made him fail to recognize the obvious signs about the wealth of the boss, and his generous offer.

Again Al Shinnawi comes out as the caring and sagacious father, who is not fooled by the sudden wealth and luck of his son. Just like any father in real life, he is prepared to fight the world for the sake of his son, which he does. In this respect Al Shinnawi sets an example that deserves to be followed by fathers in the Arab world, for we rarely see a father who is prepared to jump in the deep end to save his children. But will the headmaster be able to save his kids from the vices of the world, we have to watch to find out.

AGENDA

Exhibition

■ The British Council is currently showing a special exhibition titled *The Holy Land*, which commemorates the golden jubilee of the British Council in Jordan. The exhibition lasts till 12 December.

■ An exhibition of 30 oil paintings by the Iraqi renowned artist Ali Najjar, is currently showing at the Instituto Cervantes, and lasts till 14 December.

■ The French Cultural Centre is hosting a special exhibition of photographs displaying the journey from Morocco to Turkey. The exhibition continues till 17 December.

■ The exhibition of delightful photographs, titled *Windows and Doors*, is currently showing at the Baladna Art Gallery, at Gardens street. The photos, taken by Hani Hourani, and their display on 18 December.

■ The American Center features a poster exhibition marking the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The exhibition, which includes 30 posters reflecting the history of human rights movement in the US, will be on display until 30 December.

■ The 10th anniversary exhibition of Contemporary Arab Artists, is currently showing at Darat Al Funun, Jabel Al Weibdeh, and goes on until 28 January 1999.

Lecture

■ The Darat Al Funun will host two art meetings during this week. On 10 December, the New York-based Palestinian artist Samia Halaby will feature the "Computer Art" in cinematography, while on 17 December Iraqi artist Ismael Fattah and critic Kifah Habib will give a talk. Both meetings will be held at 5:30 pm.

■ The Goethe Institut and in cooperation with the Applied Science University (ASU), will organize two lectures this week. The first, on 6 December, will feature the "Law Studies in Germany," while the second will discuss "International Trade Arbitration" on 7 December. Both lectures will be held in Arabic at the ASU premises by Dr Omayya Alwan of Egypt.

Film

■ The European Film Festival is currently on display at the Royal Cultural Center. The festival, which shows different types of movies from Europe, lasts till 18 December.

■ A French movie entitled *La Femme Infidèle*, will be shown at the French Cultural Center on 7 December at 6:30 and 8:30 pm.

■ The American Center is showing *The Christmas Box*, today (Thursday), 3 December. It stars Richard Thomas and Maureen O'Hara. The movie begins at 5 pm.

NOVEMBER 1998

A special section offering
fresh perspectives on
global issues prepared for
The Star

THE WORLD PAPER

PRINTED IN SIX LANGUAGES
ON FIVE CONTINENTS



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China, the first country with a billion citizens, marches towards new economic heights

Carving milestones for the next century

By Yang Zheng

LOT OF FOREIGNERS are asking when China will be the biggest economy on the block? 2010? 2025? 2050?

A lot of Chinese officials and economists are asking a different question: does that milestone really matter?

According to the US-based Rand Corporation, China will outstrip America as the world's largest economy in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) around the year 2010.

This prediction is based on China's rapid growth rate in recent years and its enormous market potential.

Statistics alone make the Chinese economy look remarkably good. Over the last 20 years or so, China's GDP has grown at an annual average rate of 9.8 percent, reaching 7,477.2 billion yuan (US\$900 billion) in 1997. Its GDP now ranks seventh in the world. Its foreign exchange reserves are the world's biggest after Japan's. In 1997, China was for the fifth consecutive year the second biggest recipient of international investment money after the US. Before 1978, foreign investment in China was nil.

However, many Chinese officials refuse to be so dazzled by the silver lining that they can't see the cloud. Economic success, as a US professor said, belongs to marathon runners rather than sprinters. Can China sustain its high growth rate in years to come to win the economic marathon?

"The country's economic growth will slow down," says Zhang Lijun, an economist with the State Development Planning Commission (SDPC). According to Zhang, the rapid growth of the country's economy in the last two decades has been stimulated by severe shortages of almost all goods and services. This "honeymoon period" is coming to an end. Some markets are now glutted, certain sectors are experiencing difficulties and, to compound these problems, China's state enterprises are being restructured.

Another handicap is that China's high-tech industries are still in their infancy. "It's premature to talk big," says Yu Jianguo, another SDPC economist, who believes China will continue to exchange its low-valued labor-intensive goods for high-tech products on the international market for quite some time to come.

Zhang and Yu say that China's economy can move up a class on the high-tech ladder by upgrading outdated industrial equipment and technologies, and by making its automotive, computer, telecom and electronics sectors as competitive as those in the US. But nobody expects this to be easy. The best laid plans may be stalled—or even derailed—by one of a host of growing problems: growing unemployment which could lead to social turmoil, inequality of wealth distribution, energy constraints, population explosion and ecological deterioration.

In a recent example, China's timber industry has been shut down in Sichuan and Yunnan after being cited for causing the soil erosion that lead to major flooding along the Yangtze River—and teaching China that if the economy is developed at the expense of nature, trouble lies in store.

Realistically, therefore, any quick economic miracles are bound to have sizable side effects that in the long term may put the whole plan in reverse. "The time frame for solid economic transformation could be as much as a century," Yu says. "It is no easy job for the Chinese government to steer 1.2 billion people toward modernization."

The country's leadership is always reiterating that China is still at an initial stage of an economic Long March. In 1987, the government announced a three-stage development strategy: first, to double the 1980 GDP by 1990, enabling people to have enough to eat and wear; second, to double the 1990 GDP

by 2000, allowing people to live a relatively comfortable life; and third, by the middle of the next century, to make China's per capita GDP reach the level of moderately well-developed countries. If these final two goals are achieved, then China's modernization will have been basically realized.

As it turned out, China's GDP quadrupled in the 15 years from 1980 to 1995, five years ahead of schedule. Does this mean that the whole plan will run ahead of schedule? Some think so.

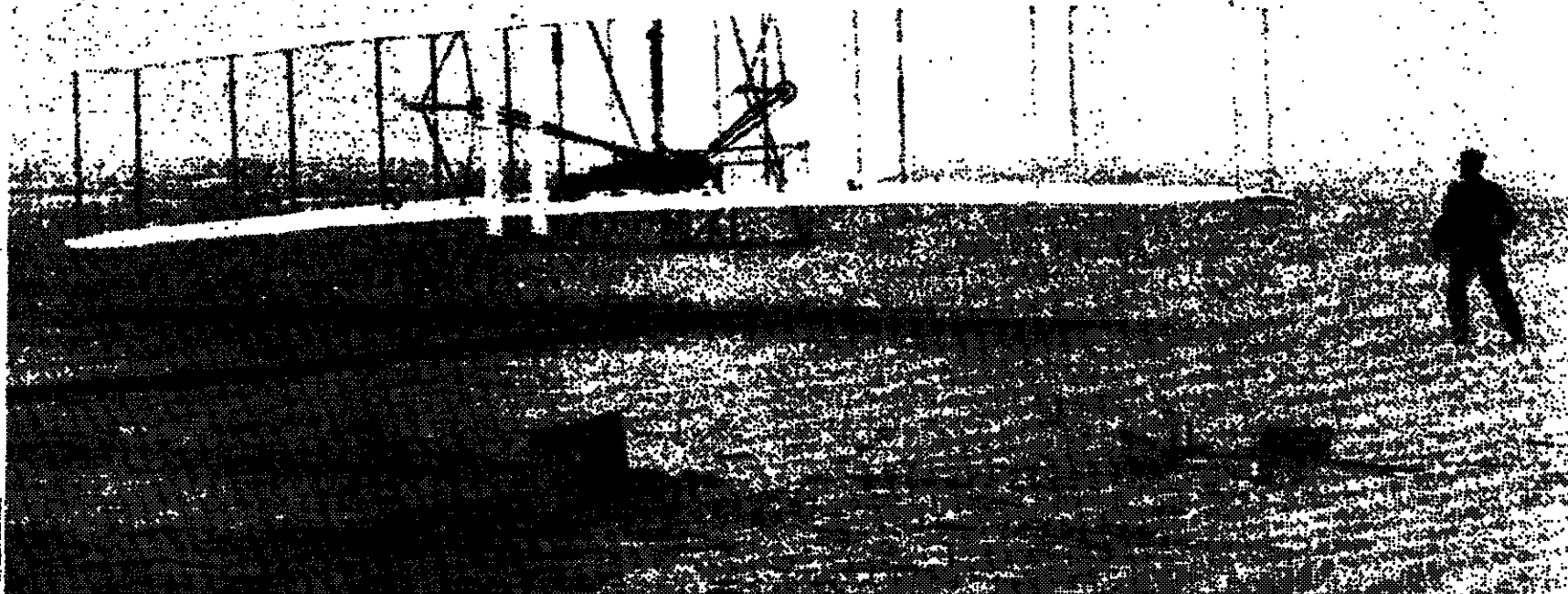
"If these performances were to continue, China will overtake the United States in 2015," says Dr. Hu Angang, an economist with the Research Group for China Studies under the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

"The critical factor is to choose the economic engine that's right and powerful enough," says Hu. "One important thing to do is to expand the rural market by speeding up urbanization."

China has 800 million farmers, many of them left redundant by market forces. These rural workers are migrating to cities, and have triggered the establishment of around 10 million enterprises. Hu argues that this trend should continue, benefiting both those who remain on the land and those who leave it. When farmers have more urban consumers to sell to, their rising incomes will fuel a new wave of consumption, production and investment, pushing the economy forward, says Hu.

That may well happen, says Dr. He Liping of the China Institute of Banking, but "how" is a lot more important than "when."

"Forget about racing and overtaking," says He. "The key thing is our route must be safe and practical." ■



► History is littered with milestones, but the path that many of them mark only becomes clear when seen in the rearview mirror. The significance of the Wright brothers' flight along a North Carolina beach is evident enough; at the time, most people viewed it as irrelevant to their lives. Today, however, information technology, databases and universal media allow us to anticipate—sometimes wrongly—the events and passages that signal history in the making. Extra-terrestrial life, youth-scarce societies, cloned humans (or parts of humans) and a new economic pecking order are some of the early candidates for the coming century

This may be the century humans find they are not alone in the universe

Measuring their journeys in light years and microns, two branches of science race towards historic events

By Aries Keck

SCIENCE HAS PROVIDED many of the milestones that mark the path of the 20th century. The image of the atomic mushroom cloud and the television footage of American astronaut Neil Armstrong stepping onto the moon are two of them.

Given the accelerating pace of scientific discoveries—and their applications—it is likely that our journey through the 21st century will be studied by more milestones carved by the world's scientific establishment. A survey of just two major fields of research, biology and space exploration, suggests that we brace ourselves for a series of

paradigm-shattering discoveries.

In the next century we may well find that we are not alone in the universe. Humans may set foot on another planet. And here on earth, a brave new biological future will certainly follow the complete mapping of the entire human genetic code.

Outer space, beyond our planet, and inner space, inside ourselves, seem to be the places to watch—from a scientific perspective—during the next 100 years.

In outer space, there has been a hiatus. Images of moon landings gave way to ones of the Challenger space shuttle exploding and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) ex-

plaining the disappearance of the US\$800 million Mars Observer as it reached Mars in 1993. Spurred by a few spectacular failures and the decreased competition from Russia, which made it easier for Congress to cut NASA's budget, the agency has been forced to adopt a new, leaner and meaner approach.

In a radical departure from NASA's former centralized projects, the current generation of programs have no announced target, no top-down directives and a funding cut-off that's under \$5 million. But the new NASA programs promise a new set of milestones.

On the drawing board are plans to complete the first international space station. Voyages to the planet Pluto and our sun are budding for the next millennia. Dan Goldin, named to head NASA in 1992, foresees projects to Mercury and Venus using innovative "space sails" that would be driven by the sun's energy.

And closer to home, last summer's discovery of massive ice reserves on the moon open up possibilities for human settlements. A "local" supply of water greatly simplifies the logistics of space colonization, and it can be broken down into its oxygen and hydrogen components as a source of rocket fuel. Plans for our nearest neighbor in the solar system include rocket launching centers and permanent research centers.

In an about-face, NASA is also intensifying the search for life on other planets. What spurred this resurgence was twofold: the discovery of what may be Martian fossils in a meteorite found in Antarctica, and the discovery on our planet of tiny organisms adapted to live in extreme heat, bitter cold, the deep-

est parts of the world's oceans and even inside solid rock a kilometer below the Earth's surface.

Buoyed by these findings, the SETI project, which stands for the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence, is now moving ahead. Dismissed as wasteful by Congress in 1993, SETI, which looks for signals of otherworldly life through a systematic search for radio signals from outer space, is finding new life both in private and public ventures.

But the most ambitious program is the brand-new Astrobiology Institute at NASA's Ames Research Center. This new program seeks to pull together disparate scientists to focus on the search for life outside our world. Several initiatives focus on what lies beneath the mysterious ice of Jupiter's moon, Europa. What looks like a watery world trapped under miles of ice may be an incubator, carefully protecting and cooing life.

Many scientists have stopped arguing whether or not life exists on other planets. Now, they say, the only question is when and where we will find it.

While space has long been the Final Frontier, on Earth the thing that remains a *Brave New World* is ourselves. Humans are boldly moving into the territory charted by Aldous Huxley in his damning novel about the dangers of tinkering with the very stuff of life itself, the human genome. But hand-in-hand with the dangers are astounding possibilities for ending disease, curing

cancers and recreating the human form.

Dolly, the "sheep heard around the world," proved that we could now create an entirely new animal with exactly the same genetic code as an adult one. Positivists see cloning as a way to preserve near-extinct species. Still others see ways of avoiding the rigors of aging and extending human life beyond the 100-year mark. Within the next few years, agriculture will not only mean farming milk or meat, but also rare hu-

man hormones, enzymes and organs for transplantation.

Scientists say that's the tip of the iceberg. The Human Genome Project, a non-profit venture, seeks to identify and sequence every part of the human

genome by 2003, opening up a welter of possibilities for fixing genetic diseases, picking-and-choosing "ideal" genes and further tinkering with what makes us human in the first place.

Last September, however, a private company announced that it planned to have the genome sequenced before 2003. Maryland, US-based Celera Inc. is using a less-proven but much faster method, and governments, lawyers and lawmakers have already expressed concern. A private company owning the code to human life is undoubtedly a milestone, but does it signal that we're on the wrong path? ■

ARIES KECK IS A WASHINGTON, D.C.-BASED WRITER SPECIALIZING IN SCIENTIFIC ISSUES.

THREE MILESTONES IN THE YEAR AHEAD

- **Global climate change:** Scientists warn that a major increase in sea levels could be triggered by the melting of glaciers in the Himalayas and the Arctic region, which will be stopped by February 1 as the official channel of maritime communication. The International Maritime Organization has issued a warning.
- **United States:** President Clinton will have given his final address to Congress on January 20, 1999. Under American law, the date 1999 is the last day of the Clinton administration. The date 2000 is the first day of the Bush administration.
- **Expansion of NATO:** The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will have expanded to include 16 new member states. The first of these will be the Czech Republic, followed by the Slovak Republic and the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

YANG ZHENG WRITES FOR CHINA FEATURES, A DIVISION OF THE BEIJING-BASED XINHUA NEWS AGENCY.

For the first time, more people over 60 than under 20

In Italy, the pendulum will swing away from youth while the next century is still young

By Susanna Jacona

BY 2010, ITALY WILL BE THE first major civilization in history where the number of citizens over 60 years old exceeds the number under the age of 18.

Italy, a country with no babies? Italy, where 98 percent of the population are members of a faith—Roman Catholicism—that frowns on birth control? How did a country noted for its fecundity become one trying to work out how it will navigate the 21st century without the vital resource of youth?

Decreasing birth rates have become commonplace in the developed world. In Italy, however, birthrates have not just declined. They've nose-dived to one of the lowest levels in the world; roughly 1.22 babies per household.

This steep fall has taken place over the course of only a few decades. In 1950, for instance, the ratio of young to old was 3 to 1, with an average birth rate of 2.1 children per household. Suspects in this mugging of the birthrate include a 50 percent decrease in the average Italian male's sperm count and a general decline in fertility amongst developed countries.

Yet infertility alone cannot account for the population patterns of the past

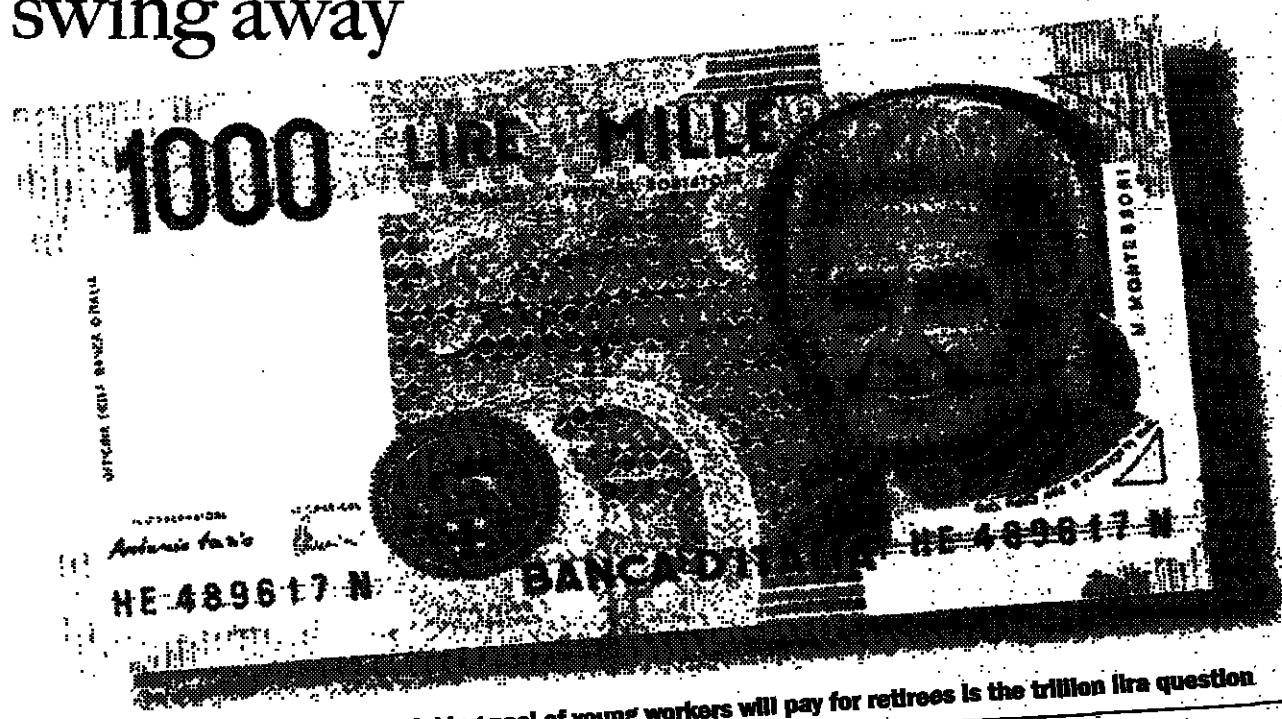
four decades or the projections for the future. The real answer lies in the politics of the country: Italy simply isn't in the business of promoting families.

Having children is often as much an economic question as a personal one. In a country where dual income households are common, public aid such as daycare facilities are a vital factor in deciding whether or not to have children. Italy has not to have children. Italy has

proven unable—or unwilling—to meet these needs. In many parts of southern Italy, for instance, there is no state-funded child care available until the age of four. Parents must rely entirely on themselves or private care.

When it comes to subsidizing families, Italy ranks as one of the most parsimonious states in Europe. The German government gives parents the equivalent of US\$44 (73,000 Italian lira) each month for the first born child. France gives \$175 for the first born and up to \$750 for the sixth, while the UK gives monthly grants of \$70 for the first born and \$56 for subsequent births. Italian parents, however, get only \$8.50 per child from the state.

The consequences of this policy will be etched in the country's demographic profile for years to come, according to



The face of the future: how a shrinking pool of young workers will pay for retirees is the trillion lira question

ISTAT, the Italian National Statistic and Census Authority. Its next census is scheduled for the year 2002, but many regional tallies have already confirmed Italy's "historical passage" to a nation whose population is dominated by older generations. In one example Pavia, a prosperous city in the north of Italy, reported in 1995 that, of its population, 18.7 percent were over 60 and only 11.8 percent under 20.

Some cities have decided to take matters into their own hands. For example, in the central region of Emilia, has pledged

to provide free "home educators" for children up to three years of age and offer grants of 4 million lire (\$2,425) to parents who choose to work part time in order to take care of their families.

At the national level, the Italian Parents Association (MOIGE) is seeking more financial aid in the wake of the European Monetary Union. "Our hope is that European economic integration will bring better family politics," states the Association. Seeking recognition as "the true productive strength of a civil society," MOIGE has made some groundbreaking proposals, such as translating

the costs of an abortion into family grants. "An abortion costs the Italian Health Ministry roughly 3 million lire. Let's give the same amount to families who have the courage to give birth. As long as having children means being poor in this country, Italy will never go far in Europe or anywhere else," argues MOIGE.

Meanwhile, the Italian government has its hands full dealing with the consequences of the falling birthrate. Many school districts, for instance, have been left floundering without enough students. Teachers are being fired or trans-

ferred to other cities.

A bigger concern is the country's pension system. What will happen when the number of citizens seeking welfare overwhelms the number of citizens contributing to the system through employment? The government is already feeling the pinch, and a wide ranging debate over solutions such as privatization is underway.

It may be that the solution lies in the thousands of would-be immigrants who land on Italian shores each month. Requests for citizenship are routinely denied and these people returned to their countries of origin. Recently, lawmakers from several political parties have suggested that the government let these people remain.

Their argument runs something like this: "These immigrants are all young; let's give them Italian nationality and let them fill our empty schools." Bold—and impolitic—words, but perhaps the first step towards change. A multicultural society may be the only way to keep Italy a "young" nation as it approaches the 21st century. ☐

SUSANNA JACONA IS A ROME-BASED WRITER SPECIALIZING IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES.

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The Star's GUIDE

Programs on JTV2
from 5 — 11 December

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Animaniacs (Cart.)
3:30—The adventure of the Bush Patrol
4:00—Neighbors (Drama)
4:30—Peer Pressure (Doc.)
5:00—French Prog.
6:10—Wind at my back
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog.
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Murphy Brown
8:00—Today's Health
8:30—The Pretender (Drama)
9:15—ABC of Democracy
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Film:
12:00—Twisted

SUNDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Pink Panther (Cart.)
3:20—Pumpkin Patch
3:30—The Adventures of the Black Stallion
4:00—Big Cat Diary (Doc.)
4:30—Wild Kids
5:00—The American Chart Show
6:00—French Program
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—The Brittas Empire
8:00—French Program
8:30—Walker Texas ranger (Police Drama)
9:05—Farming & Ecology
9:30—Behind the Scene
10:00—News in English
10:30—Mini-series
11:20—Doogie Howser

MONDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Batman (Cartoon)
3:30—David Copperfield (Children Drama)
4:00—Neighbors (Drama)

TUESDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—French Cartoon
3:30—Bananas in Pyjamas
4:00—Life Choices (Doc.)
4:30—Small Talk

WEDNESDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin

3:30—Halfway Across The Galaxy & Turn Left
4:30—Masters Of The Maze
5:00—French Program
6:15—Wind At My Back
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Program
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—(2 Point 4 Children)
8:00—Envoys Special
8:50—N.Y.P.D.
9:30—Great Moments Of Science & Technology
9:40—Faces & Places
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—The Cover Story
11:15—The Album Show

THURSDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Superman (Cartoon)
3:30—Space Precinct (Sci-fi)
4:20—The Science Show
5:00—French Program
6:25—Sparks (comedy)
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog.
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Family Matters (comedy)
8:00—Museums of The World (Doc)
8:30—Dr Quinn: The Medicine Woman (Drama)
9:10—Oprah Winfrey Show
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Film:
12:00—Dudley (Comedy)

FRIDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Moby Dick (Cart.)
3:30—Treasure Hunt
4:00—French Film
6:25—The Simpsons (Cart.)
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog.
7:30—News Headlines

7:35—Fresh Prince of Bel Air
8:00—Cinema, Cinema
8:30—Babylon 5
9:10—Ancient-voices (Doc.)
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—The X Files (Drama)
11:15—The Halifax

PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

SAMEDI

17:00—Fant pas rêver
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine L'œuf de Colomb

DIMANCHE

18:00—Bonne espérance
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E-M6

LUNDI

17:00—Ushuaia
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine scientifique

MARDI

18:00—Les cœurs brûlés
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Fractales

MERCREDI

17:00—Ushuaia
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E-M6
20:00—Envoys spécial

JEUDI

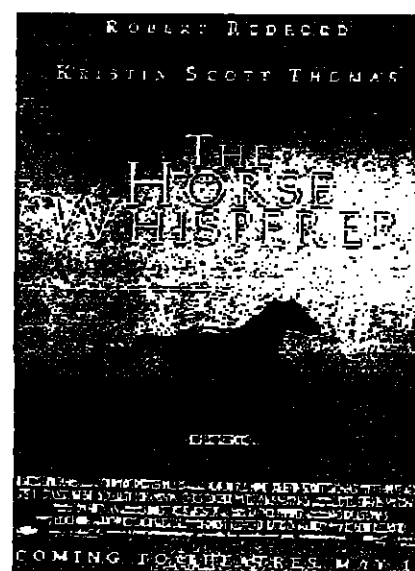
16:00—L'école des fans
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine L'œuf de Colomb

VENDREDI

18:15—Fort Boyard
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Allé la Terre

Programs are subject to change by JTV

Top Corner



Top 10 Rentals

- The Mask Of Zorro
- Armageddon
- Titanic
- Horse Whisperer
- Snake Eyes
- Dangerous Beauty
- Sliding Doors
- There Is Something About Mary
- Out Of Sight
- The Mighty

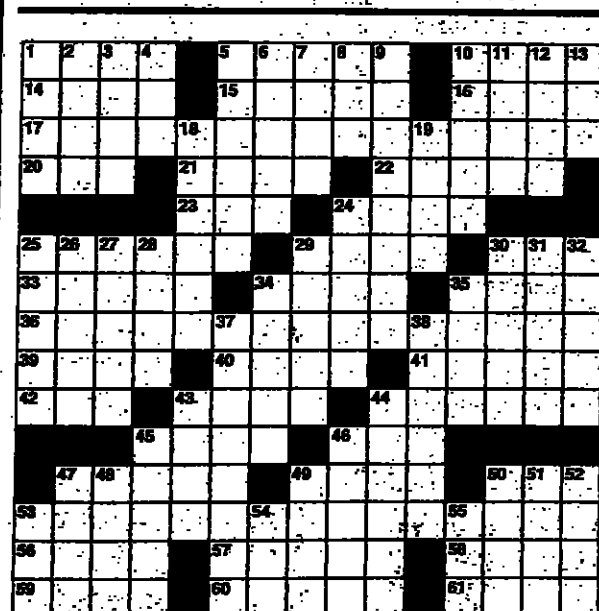
Top 10 Original

- Titanic
- Austin Powers
- Kiss The Girls
- Amistad
- Desperate Measure
- The Full Monty
- Six Days-Seven Nights
- Seven Years In Tibet
- Jackal
- The Game

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14 Clergyman
15 Booster rocket
16 Astral mistress
17 Taken in the act
20 Cart. prov.
21 Shoeborness
22 Entertain
23 Came together
24 Seed cover
25 Nancy
26 Kenyan, e.g.
29 Paso de la
30 Curved letter
33 Homer or
34 Alphabet run
35 Composer of 'My Way'

DOWN
1 Maine city
2 Israel states
3 Really ashen
39 One of the
40 Best
41 Westward high
42 Author of 'The
43 Plaster
44 Hut
45 Type of ranch
46 Dallas can-
pus letters
47 River in the
48 Rhine
49 Rings
50 Danish de-
signer
53 Very seldom
54 Come up
57 High or easy
58 flower
59 Vehicle
60 Sanable
61 Playgrounds
62 Pulled
63 Hush-hush
64 Enclaves
65 'About You'

Across
36 Surfeited
37 'Beau'
38 'Alibi'
39 'Past of a jour-
ney'
40 'Potential'
41 'Half'
42 'Eac. pres.
43 'Love affairs'
44 'Fam'
45 'machine pio-
neer'
46 'Substantive'
47 'Piano victim'
48 'Look over'
49 'Sit-R. feature'
50 'Gloomy'
51 'Be overly'
52 'Wider fore-
cast'
53 'Hush-hush'
64 'Enclaves'
65 'About You'

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: The sun is in Sagittarius, much to everybody's delight. Sagittarius is the sign of abundance and parties.

Aries (March 21-April 19). Saturn is retrograde in your sign right now. That means your focus really should be on completion.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Looks like there's quite a lot of activity in your house. The party continues, but you should be able to find some quiet time for you and the one you love.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). You have the opportunity to get some excellent coaching. The bad news is that it'll come from a partner that you'd rather argue with.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). This is a busy time of year for you. Looks like you've got more than enough to do, and more work coming in all the time.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). You're absolutely magnificent. Others will flock to see you because they've heard so much about you, and because you're performing so brilliantly right now.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You may feel squashed by your obligations. If you were all of Santa's elves, you couldn't finish everything on your list, especially to the high degree of quality you expect from yourself.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You and your friends are thicker than thieves. You're very intelligent, and you're even smarter when you're all working together.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). An older person, possibly your boss or a parent, could be a righteous bore. Might as well relax. All this person really wants is your attention, so go ahead and give it.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You're looking very good. You're a little more confident than usual. That's because the moon is transiting Leo, bringing you out of your shyness.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You could find that you're stressing about money, but don't. What you need is available. It's just that you have to go to a little bit of work in order to get it.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Argue with your partner with the intention of coming to a new agreement.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). These are your busiest work days and your best chance for a promotion or a raise.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: You're outward bound this year. Time for you to stretch your legs as well as your mind, by taking on a new challenge.

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Bridge

The Art of Crossruffing
By Omar Sharif and Tannah Hirsch

Neither vulnerable. North deals.
NORTH
♠ Q 9 4
♥ K J 7 6 5
♦ A K 9 8 7
♣ Void

WEST EAST
♠ J 8 7 5 ♠ 6 2
♥ A 4 ♥ Q 10 9 8 2
♦ 6 5 4 ♦ Q J 10 2
♣ K J 10 3 ♣ Q 2

SOUTH
♠ A K 10 3
♥ 3
♦ 3
♣ A 9 8 7 6 5 4

The bidding:
North East South West
1H Pass 2C Pass
2D Pass 2S Pass
3D Pass 3NT Pass
4S Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Ace of ♣

When your total winners are several short of the number required to fulfill the contract, it is often necessary to resort to a crossruff. Here is a classic example of how to proceed.
In view of the obvious misfit, North was understandably reluctant

to play in no trump, so proceeded to four spades in full knowledge that South would probably have to handle a Moysian 4-3 fit. The confidence in South proved to be justified.

West led the ace of hearts and continued with the four. When the king held, declarer could count four side-suit winners. The trump suit, therefore, would have to furnish six tricks, and the only way was via a crossruff. The first thing to do when planning to crossruff is to cash your side-suit winners. After taking the ace and king of diamonds, declarer came to hand by ruffing a diamond low — in view of the opening lead and continuation, trying to ruff a heart low was too dangerous. Ace of clubs and a club ruff low left declarer in position to claim four more tricks regardless of the distribution.

Two red cards were ruffed with the ace and king in the closed hand, sandwiched around a club ruff with the queen of trumps. Declarer now had nine tricks, and still held the nine of spades in dummy and the ten in hand. Another club was ruffed with the nine of trumps. If that held, it was the fulfilling trick. If it was over-ruffed with the jack, the ten of trumps would be established as the 10th trick.

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CHARLIE



"...What if I told you that the girl of your dreams is closer than you imagined—that you could reach out and touch her?"

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Jumble

Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

OSHUE
GUNEB
PROTTE
MOHGEA

Answer: HOUSE BEGUN POTTER HOMAGE

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.



HOW PATIENTS HAVE TO PAY SOME COSMETIC SURGEONS.

Answer: HOW PATIENTS HAVE TO PAY SOME COSMETIC SURGEONS

Words of Wisdom

You are judged not only by the company you keep, but the company you keep away from.

An excuse is nothing but a lie under covers.

A large favor entails a large obligation.

By hurrying, we pass by more than we overtake.

Fools line the pockets of lawyers.

An ounce of prevention is better than knowing who did it.

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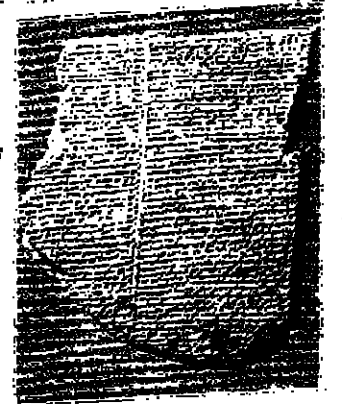
Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Le miracle cunéiforme par Véronique Abu-Nijmeh

L'écriture cunéiforme, la plus ancienne du monde, fut inventée par les Sumériens au quatrième siècle avant JC, pour les besoins administratifs des grands centres urbains de Mésopotamie. Elle se répandit dans le Proche Orient à l'âge du bronze, mais y fut supplantée vers 1300 avant JC par l'écriture hiéroglyphique égyptienne véhiculée par l'extension militaire de l'Égypte. Le cunéiforme, bien attesté en Syrie, a d'ailleurs inspiré le système égyptien vers 3000 avant JC, via les relations maritimes entre l'Égypte et la côte syrienne.

Le cunéiforme (litt. "en forme de coins") doit son nom à l'apparence de ses caractères en forme de clous. Les signes étaient gravés à l'aide d'un roseau sur des plaques d'argile fraîches (voir photo) que l'on séchait ensuite au soleil. Primitivement, les dessins représentant des objets ou des compositions symboliques. Mais l'argile, contrairement au papyrus se prête mal à la reproduction rapide de dessins. Les scribes furent ainsi amenés à pratiquer de courtes incisions avec la pointe du roseau, ce qui donna aux signes cette forme de triangle allongé, la "tige" étant produite à l'origine par le mouvement de retrait du roseau. Chaque signe avait un sens fondamental (idéogramme), mais très tôt il fallut introduire des signes phonétiques pour reproduire l'appareil grammatical de la phrase. Ainsi le système devint mi-idéographique, mi-phonétique. Il fut utilisé jusqu'au premier millénaire avant JC et servit à la notation du babylonien, de l'assyrien, langues sémitiques orientales, mais aussi d'autres langues, tel le hittite pourtant de souche indo-européenne. Avec le temps, il évolua vers la transcription phonétique syllabique mais ne franchit jamais le stade de la décomposition de la syllabe. L'innovation alphabétique naîtra à l'âge du fer dans les dialectes sémitiques occidentaux qui ne trouvaient, dans les systèmes cunéiformes et égyptiens qu'une transcription imparfaite de leurs particularités.



Éclaboussures

Le lion en cage

Ca y est. L'article publié dans les colonnes du Jourdain le 22 octobre relatant la folle quête journalistique d'Abdullah "Apo" Ocalan, vient de trouver sa chute. Le lion est en cage. Celui qu'on croyait en Syrie, en Arménie, en Russie, dans le nord de l'Irak, celui qu'on imaginait tapi dans une grotte de Cappadoce, ou reclus au fin fond du Caucase, vient d'être arrêté, à Rome. La fuite et l'arrestation de "Apo", si elle doit faire rêver John Le Carré de son prochain roman, a le mérite de poser une question cruciale. Et l'Italie, en refusant d'extraire le combattant kurde, en donne une réponse digne d'intérêt. "Apo" est-il un criminel, un terroriste, ou bien est-il un combattant de la liberté ? Rappelons que la minorité kurde, qui représente environ 13 millions d'individus en Turquie, n'est pas reconnue en tant que minorité et que selon la loi, l'usage de la langue kurde au parlement est illégal et puni de plus de vingt années d'emprisonnement. À côté de nous, la cause palestinienne pose la même question que celle soulevée par l'affaire Ocalan. Le "terrorisme" frappe-t-il plus aveuglément que toutes les guerres du monde ? Quels sont les critères qui opèrent la distinction entre un résistant et un terroriste ? Par quel miracle le prix Nobel de la paix fut-il attribué un jour à un ancien fedayi, et par quel miracle arriva-t-il qu'un ancien activiste du groupe Stern, en la personne de Yitzhak Shamir, accède un jour au poste de premier ministre ? Il ne s'agit pas de défendre "Apo", qui, dans sa façon de gérer la guérilla, reste un adepte des méthodes jadis prises de Staline, et qui a multiplié les assassinats d'activistes retirés, alors considérés comme des traitres à la cause. Il s'agit de dire qu'un jour peut être, lorsque les minorités kurdes auront accédé à la condition qu'elles revendiquent, "Apo" ne sera plus aux yeux du monde un terroriste sanguinaire, mais un révolutionnaire dans la veine de ceux qui ont marqué l'histoire de la région. Si, comme le disait Brecht, « les États sont des monstres froids », alors il est logique que certains ne puissent vouloir le secourir que par la violence. Mais le présent et les jugements qu'il porte ne valent rien : seule l'histoire aura le dernier mot sur la vraie nature de Abdullah "Apo" Ocalan.

George Weibdeh

Vous voulez écrire en français ?
Alors n'hésitez pas à collaborer à la rédaction du Jourdain. Que vous soyez passionné de politique, d'économie, de société, vos articles nous intéressent !

Stéphane Foucart
5664153

Le calvaire banal des femmes battues

La Jordanie est loin d'être épargnée par la violence conjugale. Les pesanteurs sociales et juridiques qui caractérisent le monde arabe en général et la Jordanie en particulier sont l'objet d'une lutte acharnée du gouvernement et de quelques associations. Une enquête du Jourdain.

En 1995, 54% des femmes interrogées au Costa Rica, 59% au Japon, 29% aux États-Unis et 25% au Canada ont déclaré d'avoir subi des agressions de la part d'un membre de la famille (1). Dans un pays comme la Jordanie l'obtention de statistiques fiables est problématique. Mais le bleu est bien là. « Nous devons sérieusement prêter attention à ce dangereux phénomène qu'est la violence conjugale, qui est source de souffrance pour de nombreuses femmes et qui constitue une violation de leurs droits les plus élémentaires », Le roi Hussein, en s'adressant en ces termes au Parlement, a levé le voile sur l'un des aspects les plus sombres de la situation des femmes en Jordanie. Dans onze pays de la région, c'est une véritable révolution qui est en marche. La signature, par ces pays, de la Convention pour l'élimination de la violence et de la discrimination contre les femmes, dans le cadre d'un programme régional des Nations unies (UNIFEM), devrait changer dans les années à venir la situation des victimes de violences conjugales. Sous le slogan : « Une vie sans violence, c'est notre droit », la campagne, organisée par l'UNIFEM, a été officiellement lancée par la princesse Basma Bint Talal le 22 novembre. Une promesse dont beaucoup de Jordanien espèrent qu'elle sera tenue.

Récits de la violence quotidienne

« Je ne voulais pas me marier avec lui parce que je savais qu'il buvait beaucoup et qu'il se conduisait comme un enfant, mais j'ai été forcée par ma famille ». Malgré elle, Kifah est devenue l'épouse d'un homme qui depuis les premiers jours de leur mariage l'a, sans cesse, battue. « La première fois qu'il m'a battue, c'était parce qu'un jour, alors qu'il prenait son bain, il m'a demandé de lui frotter le corps et que j'ai refusé par timidité », ajoute la jeune femme. Après avoir subi de nombreuses reprises la violence de son mari, Kifah est partie se réfugier chez son frère. Mais en découvrant qu'elle était enceinte, suivant les conseils de sa famille, elle est rentrée chez son mari. De retour « chez elle », la situation ne s'est pas améliorée. Au contraire, son mari est devenu plus en plus agressif, malgré sa grossesse. Mais tout de suite après son accouchement, Kifah décide de quitter définitivement son bourreau pour sauver, et sa vie et celle de son petit garçon, d'une situation devenue insupportable. « Ma vie avec lui devenait à la fin extrêmement pénible. Il me battait chaque fois qu'il me voyait. Et quand je lui demandais pourquoi, il me répondait toujours qu'il était libre et qu'il pouvait faire tout ce qu'il voulait de moi », se souvient Kifah avec amertume. Le corps de Kifah est abîmé. Son mari ne la battait pas qu'à mains nues. Les meubles, la vaisselle, les chaises, jetés en travers du visage, font plus mal. Aujourd'hui, Kifah vit avec son garçon de quatre ans chez sa mère en attendant le divorce. « Je travaille maintenant comme esthéticienne pour gagner ma vie et faire vivre mon fils », explique-t-elle fièrement.

Mais quel avenir pour Kifah et son enfant ? Sans le divorce, elle ne reçoit pas de pension de son mari. Une fois le divorce accordé, si elle décide de se remariée, elle perdra directement la garde de son fils. La loi est ainsi. Et si elle ne se remarie

pas, elle restera aux yeux de tous « la femme divorcée ». La société est ainsi. Maha, quant à elle, a 34 ans. Mariée, cinq enfants de trois mois à seize ans. Contrairement à Kifah, elle parle de son mari avec réserve. Elle explique que son mari est un homme bien. Qu'il est, la plupart du temps, gentil et qu'il ne la bat que « de temps en temps ». « Parfois, je ne comprends pas pourquoi il me bat. S'il me punissait parce que je me comporte mal, je comprendrais », s'excuse Maha. Tout en essayant de défendre son mari, timidement, elle reconnaît la violence des coups de son époux. « Une fois je lui ai suggéré d'aller chercher un travail, car il était au chômage, alors il m'a frappée à la tête avec un gourdin. Ce sont les voisins qui sont venus me secourir », ajoute-t-elle. A plusieurs reprises, la jeune femme a voulu de se plaindre à la police du comportement de son mari. A chaque fois, au dernier moment, l'hésitation a eu raison de ses décisions. « La seule fois que j'ai osé partir, je suis allée me réfugier chez mon père. Mais il m'a renvoyé chez mon mari en me disant qu'il ne faut pas qu'une femme se plaigne de son époux », explique-t-elle. Maha vit toujours avec son mari et elle va continuer à vivre avec lui sans rien faire pour changer sa situation. Tout juste se plaindre de temps en temps à la famille ou aux voisins. Et attendre.

Le corps faible et le visage triste, Sahar porte encore sur son corps et son visage les marques de la violence dont elle est victime. Elle n'accepte de témoigner qu'avec une extrême méfiance. Mariée à 16 ans, elle en a aujourd'hui 33. Dix-sept ans de mariage et sept enfants. Avec sa famille, Sahar, partage la maison de ses beaux parents, dans laquelle pas moins de 60 personnes habitent. Comme tous les fils de la famille, son mari a une seule chambre pour vivre avec sa femme et ses sept enfants. Calmement, Sahar explique qu'elle est amoureuse de son mari malgré tout ce qu'il lui fait subir, malgré tout ce qu'il lui a fait subir. « C'a été le coup de foudre entre nous, se souvient-elle, nous nous aimons toujours. La cause de nos problèmes, ce n'est pas lui directement, mais plutôt sa belle famille. Chaque fois qu'ils médisent sur moi, ou lui disent que je suis une mauvaise épouse, il me bat ». Sahar insiste. Son mari est un homme bon et elle attribue en partie sa violence à leurs conditions de vie déplorables. « Je ne veux pas quitter mon mari parce que je l'aime, mais même si je décidais de le quitter je ne pourrais pas parce que ma famille est en Palestine », explique la jeune femme. Sahar est enceinte de son huitième enfant. Elle souffre toujours de la violence de son mari mais selon elle, une prise de distance prochaine avec sa belle-famille sera la solution à tous ses problèmes.

La « Hotline », un programme lancé par l'Union des femmes jordanien en 1994 pour lutter contre la violence conjugale, permet aux femmes du Royaume de franchir la première étape de leur chemin vers la liberté. Trois étapes pour faire d'une femme battue, une femme tout court. La première consiste à engager une communication téléphonique avec la victime, la seconde consiste à suivre l'affaire dans l'un des centres d'Amman, de Baq'a ou de Zarqa. La troisième consiste à envoyer des experts de l'association rendre visite chez elle à la victime. Mais seulement en cas d'extrême brutalité et de danger immédiat.

Les armes de la lutte

Trois histoires, trois femmes. Différentes, mais liées par une même douleur, une même incapacité à réagir, à se sortir de leur situation, soit par contrainte sociale ou juridique, soit par manque de volonté personnelle. Selon Umm Hani, infirmière à l'Organisation des femmes arabes, le cas de ces trois femmes, malgré leur cruauté, sont relativement modérés par rapport à d'autres. « Je vois plusieurs femmes chaque jour, et la majorité d'entre elles sont battues par leur maris. La seule chose que l'on puisse faire de



Asma Khader, avocate engagée, responsable du Mizan, association qui propose soutien et conseil juridiques aux femmes victimes de la violence conjugale.



puis mai 1998, nous recevons plus de 15 appels par jour », ajoute 'Afaf. Selon elle, l'association ne peut pas suivre toutes les cas, car « certaines femmes appellent une seule fois, uniquement pour se plaindre. La volonté personnelle est essentielle parce que sans la coopération de la victime, nous ne pouvons rien faire ». Dans des cas de très grande brutalité, poursuit-elle, on est obligé d'agir très vite. On emmène la femme à l'hôpital pour un rapport médical qui est suivi par un rapport de police. Ensuite on essaie de lui trouver un abri ».

Les pesanteurs de la loi

Mais l'absence de foyer public destiné à héberger ces femmes paralyse la plupart des associations qui oeuvrent contre la violence conjugale. « Il nous arrive même, dans des cas d'extrême urgence, de louer les femmes chez nous jusqu'à ce que l'on puisse trouver une solution plus ou moins permanente », ajoute 'Afaf. L'objectif de la « Hotline » n'est pas d'encourager la victime à quitter automatiquement son mari, mais plutôt d'essayer de « mettre le doigt sur le cœur du problème afin de le résoudre. Pour 'Afaf, il faut avant tout dé-

terminer ce que la femme veut faire, et dans la majorité des cas elle ne veut pas quitter son mari, mais essayer d'arrêter l'engrenage de la violence. « C'est seulement dans les cas de grande brutalité qu'on encourage la femme à quitter son mari », ajoute-t-elle. Les experts de certaines associations réussissent quelquefois à recevoir toute la famille de la victime pour essayer de résoudre le problème mais, selon la chercheuse, les femmes ont en général peur de parler parce qu'elles ignorent les conséquences de leur paroles. « Dans la majorité des cas, les femmes ne veulent pas aller à l'hôpital pour obtenir le rapport médical, ni au commissariat pour se plaindre officiellement. Mais sans ces deux rapports elles peuvent rien prouver », explique 'Afaf. Briser le silence

représente beaucoup de courage pour une femme jordanienne. Selon Asma Khader, avocate engagée pour les droits de la femme, arrêter la violence est un processus complexe, car la plupart du temps la femme se trouve seule sans aucun soutien. Il n'en reste pas moins qu'il faut dans tous les cas agir vite. « Je connais une femme qui a subi 25 ans de violence de la part de son mari, et il y a quelques mois, elle a été légalement abusée par son époux », explique Asma Khader. Elle admet que l'homme, en Jordanie, bénéficie de plus d'outils légaux que la femme. Un divorce avantageux, le droit de se marier avec une autre femme sans handicap légal pour la garde des enfants, etc. Récemment, une loi autorisant les femmes à voyager sans l'autorisation de leur mari a constitué un premier pas dans le rétablissement d'une égalité légale entre hommes et femmes. « L'homme peut très facilement divorcer de sa femme si elle commence à se plaindre. Elle, de son côté, ne peut rien faire », affirme Asma Khader.

Cependant, si la législation jordanienne a des lacunes, l'avocate admet que la femme peut toujours porter plainte contre son mari. Les peines encourues alors par ce dernier s'étendent entre 3 mois et 3 ans d'emprisonnement, selon la nature des coups portés. Dans les cas de tentative de meurtre, les peines sont encore plus sévères. Mais, selon Asma Khader, le plus dur dans les cas de violence domestique est de prouver l'agression, car cette dernière se perpète derrière des portes fermées. « Même si la femme présente un rapport médical indiquant qu'elle a été victime de violence, il ne prouve rien l'identité de l'agresseur. S'il n'y a pas de témoins, c'est sa parole contre la sienne », explique l'avocate. Les jugements, dans les cas de violence conjugale, prennent parfois plusieurs années. D'après Asma Khader, la femme subit pendant le jugement des pressions psychologiques très importantes de la part de son mari (s'ils vivent toujours ensemble), de ses enfants, de sa famille, de sa belle-famille et de la société. « La société ainsi que le système judiciaire ne la traitent pas comme une victime, mais comme une personne qui a porté plainte contre un membre de sa famille », souligne Asma Khader. « Il faut dire non à la violence, conclut-elle, et si la victime ne peut pas dire non aujourd'hui, il faut qu'elle commence pour qu'elle ne soit jamais de nouveau victime ».

Le docteur Hani Jahshan, inspecteur médical à l'Institut national de médecine légale, reçoit à l'hôpital entre 30 et 50 femmes battues par mois. « Ce chiffre n'est pas de tout représentatif de la réalité car seule une petite minorité de femmes a le courage de porter plainte », remarque-t-il. Une femme battue a deux possibilités pour porter officiellement plainte contre l'agresseur. Elle peut soit aller à un commissariat de police, soit aller à l'Institut national de médecine légale.

(1) Source: Fact Sheet on Domestic Violence against Women, Health & Development Policy Project, Washington, DC, 1998; United Nations, The World's Women 1995: Trends and Statistics, New York, NY: United Nations, 1993; from a study 'Safe and Secure: Eliminating Violence Against Women and Girls in Muslim Societies prepared by Sister in Global Institute (SIGI).

« Notre rôle est limité à relever les marques sur le corps, et de rédiger un rapport médical qui indique le niveau de danger, aussi bien physique que psychologique, auquel est exposée la victime », ajoute Hani Jahshan, qui travaille également avec l'Unité pour la protection de la famille. Cette unité, créée il y a un an et demi par le Prince Hassan, reçoit des femmes, mais aussi des enfants, qui sont maltraités chez eux.

Cependant, selon Hani Jahshan, l'absence d'un abri mis à la disposition des associations limite considérablement l'action de ceux qui travaillent dans le domaine. « J'ai reçu une femme qui était fouettée régulièrement par son mari. Plus de cent vingt traces de fouet marquaient son corps. J'étais paralysé, je ne savais pas quoi faire parce qu'il n'existe pas d'endroit où elle aurait pu se réfugier », se souvient-il. En raison de la brutalité de ce cas particulier, cette femme a réussi, avec l'aide de l'Union des femmes jordanien et du gouvernement, à louer un appartement dans lequel elle vit aujourd'hui avec ses enfants. Mais elle est toujours sous la menace de son mari - aujourd'hui emprisonné - et risque tout simplement de se faire assassiner à la sortie de détention de ce dernier. Hani Jahshan explique que c'est uniquement depuis 1990 que l'Institut national de médecine légale a commencé à donner des rapports médicaux pouvant être utilisés par les victimes au cours de procès les opposant à leurs époux. Auparavant, tous les cas de violence conjugale étaient considérés dans les hôpitaux, non comme de véritables agressions, mais comme de simples disputes entre deux membres de la famille.

Aujourd'hui, tous les experts se mettent d'accord pour commencer à organiser une lutte cohérente contre ce phénomène. Il faut d'une part informer les femmes de leurs droits à vivre sans subir la moindre violence de la part de leur époux, et ce à travers l'éducation et l'enseignement des droits élémentaires de l'être humain, ainsi que des législations en vigueur. Deuxièmement, il est nécessaire d'aider les femmes à devenir moins dépendantes de leur mari, et particulièrement d'un point de vue financier. Troisièmement, il faut informer la société des ravages de ce mal, pour finir, promouvoir de nouvelles lois plus justes envers les victimes de violences conjugales et favoriser le développement des associations qui luttent contre ce fléau silencieux.

Samia Abu Sharar

Trois façons de s'en sortir

Les victimes de violence conjugale qui ressentent le besoin de parler, et qui veulent réagir à leur situation, peuvent recourir à des associations qui ont pour but l'apport d'un soutien psychologique, juridique ou simplement matériel.

- La « Hotline », un programme de l'Union des femmes jordanien (UJF) tel 5675729.

- L'Unité pour la protection de la famille, un programme lancé par le gouvernement. Des possibilités d'hébergement sont possibles. Tel 5623349 / 5623343.

- Mizan (Le groupe des législateurs pour les droits de l'homme) : un programme dirigé par l'avocate Asma Khader, pour une consultation juridique tel 4623773.

Dès maintenant, vous pouvez vous abonner gratuitement à la liste de diffusion par Internet du Jourdain. Au programme, la chronique ammanite de notre collaborateur George Weibdeh et les critiques des films à l'affiche. Pour vous inscrire, adressez tout simplement un courrier électronique à : le-jourdain@eudoraimail.com. Vous recevrez directement dans votre boîte aux lettres les rubriques en question.

Le mot de la semaine

«Pont»

Le pont, c'est un ouvrage d'art qui permet de franchir un obstacle, une rivière, une vallée, une mer, etc. C'est un lien entre deux points, une passerelle. C'est aussi un symbole, une métaphore. C'est un pont qui relie deux mondes, deux cultures, deux peuples. C'est un pont qui doit être solide, durable, capable de résister aux intempéries, aux attaques, aux épreuves. C'est un pont qui doit être ouvert, accueillant, capable de laisser passer tout le monde. C'est un pont qui doit être vivant, capable de se renouveler, de s'adapter, de évoluer. C'est un pont qui doit être aimé, respecté, protégé. C'est un pont qui doit être un lieu de rencontre, de dialogue, de coopération. C'est un pont qui doit être un symbole de paix, de fraternité, de solidarité. C'est un pont qui doit être un exemple, un modèle, une référence. C'est un pont qui doit être un défi, une aventure, une conquête. C'est un pont qui doit être un rêve, une aspiration, une espérance. C'est un pont qui doit être une œuvre, une création, une réalisation. C'est un pont qui doit être une fierté, une gloire, une légende. C'est un pont qui doit être une mémoire, une histoire, une culture. C'est un pont qui doit être une identité, une appartenance, une responsabilité. C'est un pont qui doit être une mission, une vocation, une destinée. C'est un pont qui doit être une promesse, une garantie, une assurance. C'est un pont qui doit être une certitude, une confiance, une foi. C'est un pont qui doit être une vérité, une justice, une liberté. C'est un pont qui doit être une paix, une harmonie, une beauté. C'est un pont qui doit être une vie, une joie, une amour. C'est un pont qui doit être une lumière, une sagesse, une connaissance. C'est un pont qui doit être une force, une puissance, une autorité. C'est un pont qui doit être une gloire, une renommée, une célébrité. C'est un pont qui doit être une légende, une mythologie, une religion. C'est un pont qui doit être une civilisation, une culture, une société. C'est un pont qui doit être une nation, une patrie, une terre. C'est un pont qui doit être une humanité, une espèce, une race. C'est un pont qui doit être une vie, une existence, une destinée. C'est un pont qui doit être une œuvre, une création, une réalisation. C'est un pont qui doit être une fierté, une gloire, une légende. C'est un pont qui doit être une mémoire, une histoire, une culture. C'est un pont qui doit être une identité, une appartenance, une responsabilité. C'est un pont qui doit être une mission, une vocation, une destinée. C'est un pont qui doit être une promesse, une garantie, une assurance. C'est un pont qui doit être une certitude, une confiance, une foi. C'est un pont qui doit être une vérité, une justice, une liberté. C'est un pont qui doit être une paix, une harmonie, une beauté. C'est un pont qui doit être une vie, une joie, une amour. C'est un pont qui doit être une lumière, une sagesse, une connaissance. C'est un pont qui doit être une force, une puissance, une autorité. C'est un pont qui doit être une gloire, une renommée, une célébrité. C'est un pont qui doit être une légende, une mythologie, une religion. C'est un pont qui doit être une civilisation, une culture, une société. C'est un pont qui doit être une nation, une patrie, une terre. C'est un pont qui doit être une humanité, une espèce, une race. C'est un pont qui doit être une vie, une existence, une destinée.

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Véronique Abu Nijmeh



Un pont qui devrait vous dire quelque chose...

C'est la vie

L'agenda français d'Amman

Cinéma

Cycle La France vue par Melville, Chabrol, Pialat.
La femme infidèle, un film de Claude Chabrol (1968), 16 mm, 94', couleur, sous-titré en arabe, avec M. Bouquet et Stéphane Audran. Un mari trompé rencontre l'amant de sa femme.
Séances au Centre culturel français le lundi 30 novembre à 18h30 et 20h30.

Exposition

Empreintes, l'itinéraire photographique de Hugues Fontaine du Maroc à la Turquie. Expo. du 2 au 17 décembre au CCCL.

Donneur dans Le Jourdain

Vous avez aimé ou détesté un article ou un dossier ? Envoyez vos réactions par mél à : le-jourdain@eudoramil.com Une rubrique "Courrier des lecteurs" devrait ainsi voir le jour dans nos colonnes, afin que Le Jourdain soit - plus que jamais - un véritable lieu de débat.

Environnement

Gestion de l'eau : les experts inquiets de la situation régionale

La conférence qui se tient à Amman du premier au trois décembre réunit une batterie d'experts en charge de faire le point sur le problème de la gestion de l'eau dans le monde arabe. Un problème mondial et régional auquel les Etats devront trouver une solution. La Jordanie est en première ligne.

C'est incolore, inodore, transparent, banal. Cela ne provoque aucune ivresse à la consommation, cela ne fait pas avancer les voitures mais c'est tellement précieux que le ministre jordanien des affaires religieuses a appelé, le 1er décembre dernier, tous les croyants à prier pour que cela vienne enfin. C'est l'eau.

Du premier au trois décembre

se tient à Amman une conférence organisée par le Réseau inter-islamique pour le développement et la gestion de l'eau et l'Agence internationale de l'eau, autour des problèmes

de gestion du précieux liquide dans le monde arabe. Les experts participant à cette conférence s'inquiètent, dans leur très grande majorité, des défis à venir que devra relever le monde en général et le monde arabe en particulier, pour conserver suffisamment de réserves d'eau potable et surtout les gérer de façon cohérente.

Le Dr Ismail Saraj El-Din, président du Centre international pour le partage de l'eau, affirme que l'appauvrissement des réserves d'eau potable est

actuellement l'un des problèmes majeurs que devra affronter l'humanité dans les années à venir. Il résume la situation en ces termes : « Si la quantité totale d'eau sur Terre remplit une baignoire, la proportion d'eau potable suffit à peine pour remplir une tasse à thé. » Mais, poursuit-il, ce qui complique le problème, c'est la répartition. Car au moment où certains pays sont riches de ressources en eau potable, d'autres en manquent cruellement.

Le Dr Eschok Soyer, professeur de géopolitique à l'Université d'Osaka (Suède), voit quant à lui le problème sous un autre angle. Les décisions gouvernementales influencent largement la question, et l'eau devient un enjeu

politique majeur, qui peut être source de conflits armés. Le docteur Hans Conzelmann explique de son côté qu'en cas de conflit entre deux pays pour le gain de réserves d'eau, les Nations unies imposent aux deux pays la recherche d'une solution pacifique incluant le partage équitable des ressources convoitées. Ainsi, l'eau n'est pas étrangère, loin s'en faut, aux tensions actuelles entre la Syrie et la Turquie. Une « guerre de l'eau » n'est pas à exclure. De la même façon, l'eau est un enjeu non négligeable de la cause palestinienne. Dans les territoires occupés, un Palestinien reçoit cinq fois moins d'eau qu'un colon israélien : ils sont 120 000 installés en Cisjordanie et reçoivent 50 millions de centimètres cubes par an. Par ailleurs, un responsable du département palestinien de la gestion des eaux indique que l'Autorité palestinienne, si elle a pu creuser deux puits d'importance à Hébron, n'a pas le droit de creuser de puits dans les bassins du nord-est et de l'ouest de la Cisjordanie.

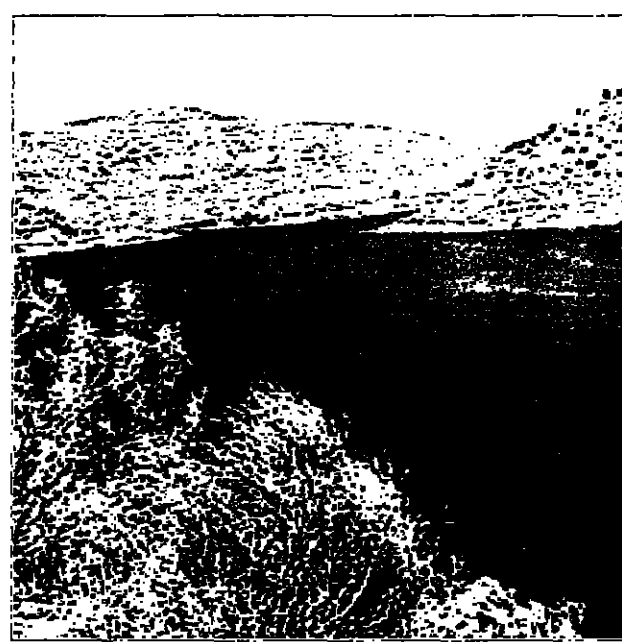
L'exploitation de ces bassins, les plus riches de la région, sont réservées à « Makrot », la compagnie israélienne de l'eau. Preuve s'il en est de l'importance géostratégique

des sources d'eau potable. De même, l'annexion du plateau du Golan par Israël, et son acharnement à le garder contre toutes les résolutions du Conseil de sécurité, relèvent en partie de cet enjeu. D'où la nécessité urgente de partager équitablement et selon des critères objectifs.

D'un autre côté, chercheurs et scientifiques se penchent sur des moyens de dessaler à moindre frais l'eau des océans, et d'économiser les sources d'eau

potables, de rationaliser leur utilisation. Des projets d'utilisation minimale de l'eau d'irrigation sont déjà à l'étude, mais actuellement, ce qui pose le plus lourd problème dans le domaine est la pollution des sources existantes. Dans le monde arabe en général, on estime à 50% la proportion d'eau distribuée aux particuliers qui s'échappe par des canalisations défectueuses. Un beau gaspillage.

Pour le cas particulier de la Jordanie, il est de notoriété publique qu'elle est gravement touchée par le problème. Manque de ressources superficielles, déjà peu exploitées, seulement 35 jours de pluie par an en moyenne, et la chaleur. On estime la part de l'eau potable par simple évaporation à environ 85%, tandis que celle perdue par ruissellement s'élève à plus de



Le lac du barrage King Talal, en Jordanie

10%. Le Dr Atef Kouborsi, professeur d'économie dans une université canadienne, estime qu'il faut, en Jordanie, construire plus de barrages et utiliser dans une certaine mesure les eaux usées pour l'irrigation.

Pour le Dr Georges Patrick qui a étudié pendant vingt-cinq les questions de gestion de l'eau dans le monde arabe, les solutions ne sont pas à portée de main et restent coûteuses. « Mais, souligne-t-il, si l'on ne prend pas de décisions aujourd'hui, celles qui s'imposeront demain seront encore plus chères. » Atef Kouborsi précise que dans le cas des pays arabes, les principales causes de l'appauvrissement des ressources d'eau sont constituées non seulement du climat, mais aussi et surtout de l'augmentation de l'activité ag-

ricole et de la surpopulation, ainsi que le mépris pour l'environnement. L'industrie consomme en effet plus de 23% des ressources, l'agriculture environ 70%. Le calcul est vite fait : il ne reste que 7% de cette eau destinée à la consommation directe. Selon Kouborsi, il est nécessaire d'augmenter légèrement le prix de l'eau destinée à l'agriculture, afin d'inciter les exploitants à plus d'économie. Mais les solutions proposées par les chercheurs se trouvent comme toujours à l'arrière des décisions politiques. C'est pourquoi, l'eau, source de toutes les convoitises, n'a pas fini de réunir les experts, à Amman ou ailleurs.

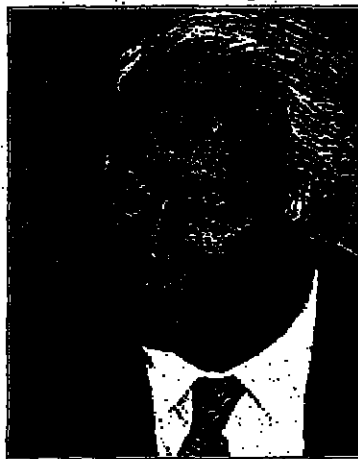
Y. A.-S.

Le Proche Orient dans la presse française

Israël dans le collimateur d'Arabes

« Vie et mort du processus de paix », telle est la matière de l'éditorial, par Mustapha Benchenane, de l'édition de novembre du mensuel Arabes, plein d'aigreur vis à vis des conduites d'Israël qui agit à son gré pour ce qui est du processus de paix. Avec bien entendu le soutien des Etats-Unis. Des faits qui mènent l'auteur à affirmer que : « Les Etats coloniaux et Israël en est un - le savent bien : ils ne ramèneront leur drapeau et ne plient bagage que lorsque le prix de leur occupation devient insupportable à leur peuple sur le plan matériel et surtout, humain... Les palestiniens peuvent, s'ils le veulent, peser sur le rapport de force et rendre insupportable aux Israéliens la poursuite de l'occupation militaire de la Palestine ». Voici un verbatim édifiant du même éditorial : « L'Etat juif a toujours bénéficié non seulement de l'impunité mais du soutien inconditionnel de l'Occident, et en particulier des Etats-Unis ». « Durant ces dernières années, aucun membre permanent du conseil de sécurité n'a déposé de résolution visant à sanctionner cet Etat. En revanche, ce même conseil de sécurité commet un crime contre l'humanité en utilisant l'embargo, auquel il soumet l'Irak, comme arme de destruction massive ». « L'essentiel est que les israéliens ont réussi à faire voler en éclats l'unité nationale palestinienne. Et en tenant pas leurs engagements d'Oslo et de Washington, ils ont compromis l'avenir des responsables directs du renforcement du courant intégriste palestinien ».

A ce sujet, le même journal publie un article sur la diplomatie de Washington présentée comme « dans la tourmente », affirmant qu'en ce qui concerne le monde arabo-musulman « les Etats-Unis peinent à avoir des relations sereines. Si historiquement, le climat général est empoisonné par l'alignement de Washington sur Israël, de nombreux contentieux sont venus, depuis, se greffer sur le conflit du proche-orient, rendant particulièrement tendues les relations entre les Etats Unis et un certain nombre de pays arabes ». Le journal ajoute que « une majorité écrasante de pays arabo-musulmans, et pas seulement



Netanyahou dans la mire d'Arabes

ceux qu'on qualifie communément d'indigènes (qui sont d'ailleurs très minoritaires) reprochent aux Etats Unis leur politique de « deux poids, deux mesures » dans le conflit israélo-arabe, dans la définition qu'ils donnent du terrorisme international et de la violation par un Etat ou par un autre de la légalité internationale ».

Le chef de la guerre libanaise, Samir Geagea, fait l'objet de l'article de Jean-Pierre Pottin, publié par Libération le 29 novembre, évoquant des voix qui s'élèvent au Liban pour la libération de ce personnage libanais : « Pour les intellectuels de la gauche libanaise, Samir Geagea fut longtemps assimilé au diable. Il pouvait donc leur sembler légitime que le chef des forces libanaises (les ex-milices chrétiennes issues des phalanges de Bachir Gemayel) termine sa vie en enfer, en l'occurrence un cachot minuscule et infect au quartier sous-sol du ministère de la défense à Beyrouth. Et ce son iniquité de tous les chefs de guerre à avoir été exclu de l'omniscience générale - ou est-ce la crainte qu'un abus de droit soit suivi par d'autres, mais quelques voix s'élevaient à l'initiative d'intellectuels, à faillir voir le jour ; elle a été retirée faute d'avoir recueilli assez de signatures chez les musulmans ».

Nahed Al Khloof

«La solidarité dans le monde arabe est nécessaire»

Foad Dabbour, secrétaire général adjoint du Parti Baas arabe progressiste (pro-syrien), se confie au Jourdain sur les grandes questions de la politique jordanienne. Premier volet de notre nouvelle rubrique.

Le Jourdain : En quoi le Parti Baas arabe progressiste se démarque-t-il - ou ne se démarque-t-il pas - des autres partis d'opposition ?

Foad Dabbour : Il n'existe pas de réelles divergences entre les partis de la gauche jordanienne, mais il est vrai que certaines convictions idéologiques et intellectuelles nous sont propres. Si nous exerçons nos actions sur la base d'un seul et même programme, nous (les partis de l'opposition, ndr) ne deviendrons qu'un seul et même parti, or il reste des divergences sur l'adaptation politique de certains projets.

Mais de nombreux idées et projets communs rapprochent les partis de la gauche et ceux se réclamant de la religion. Ce sont la lutte contre la normalisation avec Israël, et la lutte contre toute incursion, que ce soit dans les domaines culturels, économiques ou sécuritaires de l'état hébreu dans le monde arabe. Au sein des partis de l'opposition, plusieurs unités de soutien aux pays arabes menacés par Israël et les Etats-Unis ont d'ailleurs été créées. Quant à notre position sur la guerre du Golfe et la guerre Iran-Irak, elle est quelque peu différente de celles des autres partis de la Conférence de l'opposition. Nous considérons quant à nous que ces deux guerres ont endommagé les ressources de deux pays, alors qu'elles étaient nécessaires à une réelle opposition avec Israël. Et en ce qui concerne la guerre du Golfe, nous déplorons qu'elle ait ce point enflammé les relations « arabo-arabes ».

Quelle est votre position sur la paix israélo-jordanienne ? Pensez-vous qu'il faille renégocier la paix ?

Nous n'évaluons le traité de paix qu'en fonction de ses textes et de ses articles, et puis, qu'il ne répond pas à la demande nationale arabe, nous le rejetons. Certains de ces textes



« Les recommandations du Fonds monétaire international ont eu une influence néfaste sur l'économie »

Foad Dabbour

dispose que la Jordanie doit s'engager à des résolutions qui vont à l'encontre de ses intérêts et de sa sécurité. Les israéliens, quant à eux, ne respectent pas à la lettre les clauses du traité qui peuvent nuire à leur sécurité. Par exemple, ces derniers tentent toujours de bloquer le passage des marchandises de la Jordanie en Cisjordanie, ce qui va à l'encontre du traité. La paix ne dépend que des dirigeants israéliens. Et elle n'est pas possible tant qu'ils répètent que Jérusalem est la capitale éternelle d'Israël et que les colons s'installent sans cesse.

Quelles grandes mesures selon vous nécessaires pour endiguer l'augmentation de la pauvreté ?

Soyons objectifs : la Jordanie est un pays aux moyens économiques limités. Sa principale richesse est l'homme cultivé et qualifié. Mais les emplois sont ailleurs, surtout dans les pays du Golfe. La condition de

Politiques

l'emploi s'est dégradée pour deux raisons. La crise irakienne a eu des effets néfastes sur les possibilités d'emplois dans le Golfe pour les jordaniens. D'autre part, ces emplois commencent à être pourvus par des citoyens de ces pays. Ainsi, il n'est pas aisé de trouver des solutions définitives contre le chômage. Mais l'adoption d'un plan adéquat et l'utilisation des ressources de la nation peuvent réduire le taux de chômage et donc celui de la pauvreté.

Les recommandations du Fonds monétaire international sur ce point ont une influence néfaste sur l'économie jordanienne, dans laquelle une seule catégorie a le pouvoir de gérer les ressources de la nation. Cela a contribué à supprimer la classe moyenne, qui est la principale source de stabilité d'une société.

Que pensez-vous de la situation de la presse en Jordanie ?

Devant les difficultés aux-

quelles est confrontée la nation arabe, comment voyez-vous un éventuel rapprochement entre la Syrie et l'Irak ?

Nous avouons que les divergences entre ces deux pays arabes font de grands dommages aux intérêts arabes. Nous passons par des conditions telles qu'il est nécessaire d'aller au-delà des divergences pour trouver un intérêt supérieur. Il faut à tout prix chercher à avoir des relations de solidarité unioniste et nous sommes aujourd'hui dans une situation propice à tous les rapprochements. Ainsi devant des événements comme les accords militaires entre la Turquie et Israël, qui ont pour but d'isoler et de fragiliser la Syrie, une solidarité totale est nécessaire. D'ailleurs, ces dernières années, les relations syro-irakiennes ont été développées. Dans le bon sens.

Propos recueillis par Youssef Abu-Saleh

«Unité, Liberté, Socialisme»

En 1943, Michel Aflak, un intellectuel syrien, fonde à Damas le Parti de la résurrection arabe, dans un contexte de lutte contre la domination occidentale. Le parti de Michel Aflak fusionne en 1953 avec le Parti socialiste arabe d'Akram al-Hawrani, pour donner naissance au Parti socialiste de la résurrection arabe, le Baas (on trouve parfois écrit : Baath). Sa doctrine repose sur un impératif essentiel : la constitution d'une nation arabe unifiée par un régime socialiste, s'étendant du Maroc à l'Iraq. A la suite de divergences sur le mode d'application du socialisme, le Baas a connu un schisme qui l'a divisé en deux mouvements. L'un des courants est au pouvoir en Irak, l'autre en Syrie. Jusqu'en 1993, le Parti Baas arabe progressiste (pro-syrien) exerce son action en Jordanie dans la clandestinité. La loi sur les partis politiques lui a permis de devenir un mouvement officiel et déclaré. Il comprend environ un million de membres officiels et compte des centaines de partisans dans toutes les régions du pays. Le PBAP entre-

tient de bonnes relations avec le pouvoir syrien et, selon ses membres, joue un rôle décisif dans la libération de certains prisonniers jordaniens en Syrie. La devise du PBAP est simple et tient (comme d'autres) en trois mots : « Unité, Liberté, Socialisme ». Le mode de financement du PBAP tient également en trois volets. Chaque membre officiel verse 1% de son salaire au parti et ce dernier « vend » des sièges universitaires à ceux qui désirent étudier dans les universités syriennes. En outre, la vente des livres et des ouvrages du parti constitue une source de revenus non négligeable. Le Baas, d'une façon générale, prend racine dans le sentiment d'une unité arabe, auquel sont sensibles de nombreux citoyens des pays du Machreq. Selon une enquête du Centre d'études de l'unité arabe, 78% des citoyens de ces pays pensent que le monde arabe constitue une nation. Cependant, l'objet de l'étude étant la raison d'être de l'institution l'ayant menée, ce chiffre est à prendre avec toutes les précautions d'usage.

Y. A.-S.

The Star Stadium

Edited by Abdul-Hamid Addasi

TIME OUT Boxers who want to box



By Abdul Hamid Addasi
Special to the Star

WHEN A problem occurs to a team on the basketball or handball court, the team coach usually asks for a "time-out" to make alterations to the team and to give new instructions.

When I was looking for a name for my new column, I wanted something that would attract attention to the obstacles facing Jordanian Sports, so I decided on Time Out.

The first time out I will give is to the Jordanian Boxing Federation. Their image is currently full of contradictions: an image of gold medals won by numerous strong boxers at the Arab Championships, but training with poor, "past their sale-by date" equipment.

Mohammed Abu Khadejeh knows only too well the problems that face boxers in the Kingdom. Abu Khadejeh has won three gold medals this year—at the 8th Pan Arab Games in Beirut, the West

Asian Games in Iran, and at the Arab Championship held in Tunisia—but despite this success, the situation is not as good as it sounds.

Abu Khadejeh doesn't have any boxing gloves or training shoes of his own. Neither does he have any training partners to practice with. Instead, he has to train with his coach, Hussam Amcereh, "in one training session, I broke Hussam's hand, which meant that I could not train," he said. In addition to this, his gym is surrounded by torn punch bags and dilapidated boxing rings.

Abu Khadejeh will be participating in the Asian Games next week in Bangkok, along with another two very good Jordanian boxers, Ayman Al Nadi and Basel Hindawi.

If we are to nurture the next generation of boxers, we must ensure that the equipment and training facilities are in order. My first "Time Out" goes to the Jordanian Boxing Federation.

Football or Kickboxing?

BANGKOK—The 13th Asian Games motto of "Friendship Beyond Frontiers" had a hollow ring to it last night after a pre-Asian friendly soccer match between Thailand and Qatar erupted into a violent free-for-all and had to be abandoned amid ugly scenes at the Rajamangala Stadium.

According to the Bangkok Post, it was the last thing Thailand's national football team needed after just coming off a six-week ban imposed by the Asian Football Confederation, following a farcical match against Indonesia in the Tiger Cup in Vietnam two months ago.

Trouble started 10 minutes into the second half with the teams tied 0-0 in what was becoming an increasingly ill-tempered match. After a series of fouls by Qatar, a melee erupted when a Qatar player tried to wrest the ball from Dusit Chalermsaeng's hands.

Both sides then lost control and in disgraceful scenes launched into flying karate-style kicks at one another.

For five minutes there was mayhem as players and even some officials battled it out and chased one another around the field kicking and with fists flying. Some of the 3,000 fans at the new stadium joined in by throwing plastic water bottles at the Qatar players. There were no serious injuries although some of the players suffered bruising from the kicks.

With six days to go before the Asian Games soccer competition, the incident once again damages Thailand's footballing image following the Tiger Cup affair, and a warm-up match against Kazakhstan earlier this year which also erupted into a brawl.

There was a noticeable lack of security at the stadium yesterday with only a few guards

hired by the Sports Authority of Thailand.

Mr. Abdulla, the Qatar team manager, said he was very sorry his team was involved in such an incident and wished his players had kept their tempers.

Peter Withe, adviser to the Thai national team, was shocked at the turn of events. The former England international told the players they could only win by using their brains and scoring goals, not by fighting.

Thavatchai Sajakul, the team manager, was taken aback at the eruption but did not say whether any of his team would be disciplined. He said, "The Thai players must learn they are representatives of the Thai people and actions like that tarnish the image of the country." Mr. Thavatchai thanked most of the spectators for not getting involved, otherwise the situation could have been even more serious.

Tunisia claims record 3rd CAF Cup

SFAK. Tunisia won the African Football Confederation (CAF) Cup for a record third time when Club Sportif Sfaxien blanked Jeanne d'Arc of Senegal 3-0 Sunday.

Sfaxien, making its first appearance in a competition for national league runners-up, triumphed 4-0 on aggregate after winning the first leg 1-0 in Dakar two weeks ago.

Mohamed Salah Meftah opened the scoring after 14 minutes and added a second in the 69th minute before Skander Souayah completed the rout with five minutes left.

Tunisia World Cup midfielder Souayah scored eight of the 20 goals that brought victory to a club that has lived in the shadow of domestic giants Esperance and Ettifaq du Sahel.

Ettifaq won the 1995 CAF Cup, was runner-up in 1996 and Esperance lifted the trophy last year. Nigeria has won the cup twice and the Ivory Coast and Morocco once each.

The victory margin was a record for the final, bettering the three goal cushion Shooting Stars of Nigeria had over Nakivubo Villa of Uganda six years ago.

Tunisia could complete a pan-African double on 6 December when Esperance takes a 3-1 lead over Premiero de Agosto to Angola for the second leg of the Cup Winners Cup final.

Champion's League A dream finish for Baggio

MILAN—Scoring the goals which sank Real Madrid and propelled Inter Milan towards the European Champions League quarterfinals was a dream come true for Roberto Baggio.

The world's best known and arguably best-loved number 10 had spent the last three months battling with a tendon injury and was relegated to the substitutes bench last week.

But with the score deadlocked at 1-1, and Inter's hopes of reaching the last eight beginning to fade with little more than 20 minutes to play, Baggio came on to score twice in the last five minutes.

"I often dream," he admitted. "This was an important match and I had been hoping I could make it finish like it did."

It was my dream, but it was one that all my teammates shared too because matches like these are fundamental for a team. I scored those goals not for me, but for the team to win the match.

"Winning brings a group of players closer together and gives them confidence. We all wanted to turn the match

around. We took the lead and then they equalized, but the desire to win was there right from the start. Obviously, everyone wants to play from the first minute, but if every match were to finish like this I'd be happy to play just 20 minutes."

Not only did the ending signal Baggio's return to form, but it also raised hopes of a revival too in the Serie A, where Inter are struggling down in mid-table after losing four of its last six matches.

Tipped as pre-season favourites for the title, the injuries suffered by Baggio and Ronaldo have robbed the team of its shape, while the losing streak could yet cost coach Gigi Simoni his job.

But Baggio is a born optimist and convinced that Inter has the talent to change now that the two men are back.



"The important thing now is not to throw away everything that we have built, everything we have achieved here tonight," he said.

"We have to realize that every match is difficult and we have to go into it with the same determination that we had here. Otherwise we risk going back to the highs and lows that unfortunately we've had until now."

Looking forward to renewing his partnership with Ronaldo, he said: "Every player needs to work on their fitness. Unfortunately, he has been out of action for a long time. Like me until recently. Now he and I just need to play, it's the only solution."

Though Baggio wants to end the losing streak, he is a stranger to highs and lows in his own career.

After two unhappy years on and off the bench at AC Milan, he joined Bologna in the summer of 1997 and went on to score a personal record of 22 league goals, also earning him return to the national side.

France 98 brought him two goals and two more for his teammates—but he was ultimately relegated to the job of being a substitute for his former understudy at Juventus, Alessandro Del Piero, who flopped badly.

Sheer professionalism is the key to Baggio's ability to bounce back, and to score crucial goals.

"I don't think it's by chance," he said. "Everyone has a sense of determination in their lives and when I do this job, I try to do it with everything I have—whether it's a whole match or a quarter of an hour. If I've scored a lot of important goals, it's down to that. You might play regularly, you might not. What counts is that when you do, you bring out everything that's inside you. In my case, it's to do that. I mean I don't have any regrets."

Reports on English premier league matches

Arsenal (1) Middlesbrough (1)

Brian Deane stole in front of the Arsenal defense to put Boro ahead after six minutes from a Dean Gordon cross.

Injury-hit Arsenal looked toothless in attack until Frenchman Nicolas Anelka hammered in an equalizer off the underside of the bar a minute from time.

Liverpool (2) Blackburn Rovers (0)

Inconsistent Liverpool brushed aside managerless Rovers, which suffered their fourth straight defeat.

Paul Ince put Liverpool ahead with a thumping 25-meter shot on the half-hour and three minutes later Michael Owen made it 2-0 when his close-range shot was blocked by the Blackburn goalkeeper but rebounded off his knee and in.

Only Nathan Blake looked a threat for Rovers, which remain rooted to the bottom of the table.

Manchester United (3) Leeds United (2)

David O'Leary's Leeds shocked the home side when Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink beat Peter Schmeichel at his near post from 15 meters out after 29 minutes.

Norwegian Ole Gunnar Solskjaer drove in an equalizer for the home side right on halftime and Roy Keane side-footed it ahead a minute after the resumption. Australian Harry Kewell curled in a second Leeds goal after a Jaap Stam error but Nicky Butt secured the three points for United with a fierce drive 13 minutes from the end.

Charlton (1) Everton (2)

Stand-in striker Danny Cadamarteri scored both Everton goals to soften the blow of losing Duncan Ferguson.

His first came in first half injury time and his second just a minute after Mark Kinsella's 72nd minute equalizing free kick. Everton's Michael Ball missed a penalty with the score at 1-0.

Chelsea (1) Sheffield Wednesday (1)

Gianfranco Zola found himself unmarked at the far post and headed in Celestine Babayero's deep cross to put Chelsea ahead after 27 minutes.

However, Andy Booth sneaked in at the near post to equalize in the 67th. The entertaining draw represented a Chelsea club record of 19 games unbeaten but will be seen as two points lost.

Coventry City (1) Leicester City (1)

Leicester was reeling after Frank Sinclair was sent off for two bookings early in the second half and more so when Darren Huckerby scored for Coventry

after 78 minutes.

But battling Leicester earned a point when Emile Heskey struck in the 89th minute.

Newcastle United (3) Wimbledon (1)

Duncan Ferguson made a dream debut after his 8 million pounds (\$13.25 million) move from Everton, scoring the second and third Newcastle goals. Marcus Gayle shot Wimbledon ahead after 34 minutes but Peruvian Nolberto Solano equalized four minutes later.

Ferguson then scored with a mis-hit shot and sealed the win with a trademark header at the death.

Nottingham Forest (2) Aston Villa (2)

Forest produced its best performance of the season to take a 2-0 halftime lead with goals by Chris Bart-Williams and Dougie Freedman.

But two goals in five minutes early in the second half saved the league leaders from a second straight defeat.

Southampton (0) Derby County (1)

Horacio Carbonari scored Derby's goal after 33 minutes with a speculative long range effort.

West Ham United (2) Tottenham Hotspur (1)

West Ham moved to second place, its highest in 13 years, thanks to a double by Trevor Sinclair.

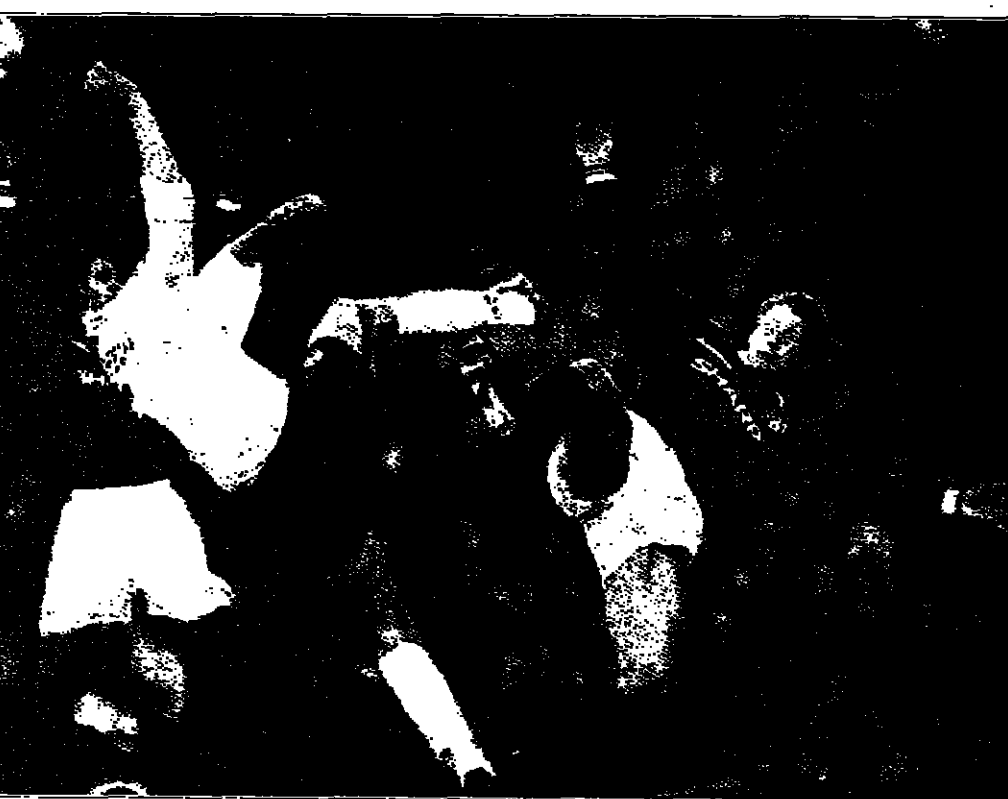
He banged in the loose ball after Spurs keeper Espen Bardson failed to hold Frank Lampard's long shot in the 39th minute and made it 2-0 in the first minute of the second half.

Spurs fought back well after Chris Armstrong's header reduced the deficit but although both sides hit the bar, it remained 2-1.

Reports of Italian first division matches

Bari (0) Fiorentina (0)

Serie A's most prolific attack, the front-line duo of Gabriel Batistuta and Edmundo, rarely tested the league's best defense. Instead Fiorentina owed its point to the goalkeeping of Italy No. 3 Francesco Toldo, who had brilliantly



saves against Dane Peter Knudsen in the first half and Diego De Ascentis and South African Philemon Masinga in the second.

Bologna (3) Juventus (0)

Playing against a side which has scored nine goals in its last three matches without suspended Uruguayan Paolo Montero, Juventus' defense disintegrated in the opening half hour with Michele Parmatti's third-minute goal quickly followed by strikes from Giuseppe Signori and Davide Fontolan. Bologna is unbeaten in 16 league and cup games while Juve is without a win in its past four matches.

Empoli (1) Vicenza (0)

Massimiliano Carrarelli's 31st-minute winner meant Empoli quickly made up the two points docked earlier in the week after allegations of attempting to influence a referee. Vicenza's hopes of its first road win in 11 months disappeared with the 53rd minute sending-off of Uruguayan striker Marcelo Otero for an off-the-ball incident.

Inter Milan (2) Salernitana (1)

When David Di Michele put the visitors into a deserved, 43rd-minute lead, Inter looked destined for a third defeat of the

season in front of its home fans. But Roberto Baggio, whose two goals gave Inter its midweek Champions' League victory over Real Madrid, rescued his side again with a pinpoint corner for Diego Simeone to grab a 76th minute equalizer. Simeone's Argentine compatriot Javier Zanetti claimed a dramatic injury-time winner with a fierce right-foot shot that revived his team's fading title challenge.

Parma (4) AC Milan (0)

Parma made a mockery of its early season scoring problems with its most lopsided victory ever over Milan. Enrico Chiesa opened the home side's account in the 25th minute before Argentine Hernan Crespo found the target on both sides of half-time.

The Argentine has now scored seven goals in 10 matches comprising two double strikes and a hat-trick. France's Alain Boghossian added a fourth in the 90th.

Perugia (2) Piacenza (0)

Japan's Hidetoshi Nakata once again showed he has quickly found his feet in Serie A with a superb overhead kick to put Perugia in front in the 20th minute before side-footing in his sixth goal of the season in the 50th. Both goals came after crosses from Croat Milan Rapajic.

visitors afloat.

Reports of French first division matches

Girondins Bordeaux (1) RC Lens (0)

Bordeaux proved it was the only team with the stamina to stay with Marseille in the title race, scoring a winner through midfielder Johan Micoud on the hour.

But for some fine saves by Lens goalkeeper Guillaume Warmuz, Bordeaux could have won more comfortably.

Olympique Marseille (0) Paris St Germain (0)

In a tight, tense match well controlled by the referee, Marseille could have won by several goals but failed to find the net once, while an extremely defensive PSG did not have a single shot on target.

Bastia (4) Olympique Lyon (1)

Corsica proved a burying ground for yet another leading side as Bastia took an early lead with a fine free kick from Frank Jarrett and never looked back.

After Frederic Nee and Lyon's Marco Grassi made the halftime score 2-1, striker Pierre-Yves Andre converted a penalty and scored a fine solo goal, chip-

ping the ball over a defender and then lobbing the goalkeeper.

Lorient (0) Nancy (1)

With Irishman Tony Casciaro failing to find the net for Nancy for the first time in five matches, Samuel Wiart scored from a tight angle just before the interval as his side won their second successive match.

Metz (3) Montpellier (1)

Montpellier won at Metz last season, a result that may have cost the home side the title. Revenge was sweet with Yugoslav striker Vladan Lukic scoring two fine second half goals.

Earlier, veteran Montpellier defender Franck Silvestre's header had canceled out the 45th minute opener from Bruno Rodriguez, his sixth goal of the season.

Le Havre (2) AJ Auxerre (1)

The home side overcame a 19th minute goal for Auxerre by striker Thomas Denand and a penalty miss by Oumar Sane in first half injury time for its third victory of the season.

Two goals inside a minute by Mamar Mamouni and Yugoslav Miladin Becanovic sank Auxerre who have not won away.

Strasbourg (1) Monaco (1)

Monaco, having lost touch with the leaders because of their dismal form on the road, restored some pride by ending a run of five away defeats.

Defender Philippe Christanval put Monaco ahead, tapping in the rebound after a fine shot from a narrow angle on the left by David Trezeguet was headed off the line by Teddy Bertin.

Corentin Martins equalized with a low, 25-meter shot in the 35th minute that goalkeeper Fabien Barthez, unmarked by defenders, was late in trying to cover.

Toulouse (1) Sochaux (1)

A penalty save by former Paris St Germain goalkeeper Vincent Fernandez from Robert Malm two minutes from time helped Sochaux extend its unbeaten run to four matches.

Toulouse, which has gone seven matches without winning, went in front through Croatian Vladimir Petrovic in the 70th minute. Bernard Bouger headed an equalizer four minutes later.

Rennes (2) Nantes (3)

Nantes snatched victory and ended Rennes' unbeaten home record with two goals in the final two minutes from substitute Patrick Suffo and midfielder Christophe Le Roux.

Rennes had the better of the first half with powerful Burundi striker Shabani Nonda sweeping home a Stephane Gregoire cross in the 25th minute and Gregoire hitting the second from the edge of the box.

In between, midfielder Antoine Sibierski's equalizer ended one of Nantes' many fine movements that finally brought it victory.

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Reports that Jordan's Government sets up Year 2000 (Y2K) Committee: Cabinet address Y2K

JORDANIAN Government has recently addressed the Year 2000 problem (Y2K) by establishment of a high committee. The committee, headed by Prime Minister, Fayez Tarawneh, is responsible for the setting of a national action plan to counter the threat of the Y2K problem, allocating the necessary financial resources to the task.



seek the help and assistance of professionals in the execution of its goals. An emergency plan is being set, to handle any irregularities that may result from not implementing Year 2000 compliance procedures in any organizations on time. A progress report is to be delivered every two weeks by the committee.

The Year 2000 problem is receiving much more attention from the local media and local professional organizations. With less than 13 months to go, it seems unlikely that all sources of Year 2000 problems will be solved; but the committee, in cooperation with Jordan's private sector, should be able to make the major sites Year 2000 compliant. Apparently, the Jordan private sector has already taken moves in the right direction with a number of major banks already implementing Year 2000 compliance programs.

mental sector are concerned with massive reports to be drawn up detailing the nature of the software solutions in place and any possible points of worry. Specifically, all systems related to matters of public health and well-being, and national security will receive special attention immediately.

The committee is to promote Y2K awareness among organizations in Jordan's private sector. Also, the committee is to

Beware of Internet theft

CONSUMER PROBLEMS on Internet are on the rise. The problem is that consumers "tricked" into ordering products which are not delivered as promised. These purchases are made by cheques mailed or cash transfers.

receive a totally different product than the one advertised!

It seems as if the Internet is the new highway for rip-offs. Scam artists and "fraudsters" are having a field day with the Internet.

Some studies show that Internet fraud is increasing by as much as 50 percent every year. The Internet Fraud Watch in Washington DC receives 300 stinging complaints each



month, three times the number it got last year.

The best advice, for now, is to buy from well-reputed suppliers, who are well-known to the buyer and can be trusted. Also, only use credit cards, because they provide a written record of purchase, that can be legally used. Naturally, consumer groups are moving in with advice and action.

AMD challenge Intel with K6-300MHz for notebooks

LATE IN 1999, AMD will introduce a chip, code-named Shamrock, that will have 256KB of integrated Level 2 cache and a 100MHz bus.

The K6 processors will be used mainly in value-oriented notebooks. Compaq Computer Corp., which effectively created the \$1,000 desktop PC market with Cyrix Corp. chips, is already using AMD's 266MHz K6 and will use the 300MHz version in its Presario notebooks.

AMD officials said other notebook makers will announce K6-based products, although they declined to say who or when.

Analysts are in agreement that the mobile market is ripe

for competition.

Intel, of course, won't let things get out of hand. The company needs to fill the gap left open between today's pricey Pentium II notebooks and Celeron-based systems coming in the first quarter. Intel will resurrect the Pentium with MMX product line early next year and introduce a 300MHz Pentium Processor with MMX Technology, officials confirmed. That chip will cost about \$185, sources said. Still, AMD may have important time-to-market advantages over Intel. For example, AMD is expected to introduce an integrated 3D instruction set into mobile processors, the K6-2, months before Intel does the same with its mobile version of

the Katmai processor.

Also, AMD is expected to introduce a 100MHz bus implementation in portables in the first half of 1999.

Intel is not expected to reach that milestone until September of 1999 when it introduces Coppermine.

As previously reported, Intel intends to introduce a raft of low-cost processors, in 1999, including its first Celerons for notebooks—a 233MHz chip for about \$105 and a 266MHz processor for about \$155.

The larger question for AMD is whether the company has the cachet to demand premium prices from customers. The 300MHz K6 will cost \$229. ■

News update

Compaq Cus Presario prices

Compaq announced price cuts of up to 17 percent on some of its most popular Presario Internet PCs. Two of the models—the Presario 5050 and 5150—which are up to 11 percent lower than similarly configured HP models, yet deliver up to 211 percent better performance, now deliver an even greater value.

These price changes and recent competitive benchmark testing underscore Compaq's leadership in delivering the best value, performance and technology in the sub-\$1000 category.

TISG appointed as Intel dealers in Jordan

Tantash Information Systems group has recently been appointed as the Jordan dealer for Intel D&I products which include a wide range of solutions. TISG is the Jordan distributor for Acer, ByteQuest, Sybase. The company is also licensed as a Microsoft authorized technical training center.

For more information contact TISG at telephone 5691111.

Sony HiFD gives users 200MB on floppy

Sony's 200MB floppy disk drive is being well received by the industry, as it provided

backward compatibility with 3.5 inch (1.44MB) disks. This means that users can still read their software collection on their new drives, and can enjoy all the benefits of 200MB storage per disk. It is amazing. The Sony HiFD is co-developed by Fuji and Sony. IBM, Acer and others include the drive as a built-in option to buyers, instead of standard 1.44MB drives.



Seagate announces a 17GB hard disk

SEAGATE TECHNOLOGY has announced the newest addition to its Medalist line of 3.5-inch hard disk drives for desktop computers.

Highly-leveraged from Seagate's Medalist and Medalist Pro platforms, the 4.3-Gbyte-per-disc Medalist 17240 combines proven technology with breakthrough performance and value-added features.

With over 17 Gbytes of capacity combined with Seagate's ease-of-integration, the Medalist 17240 offers performance and quality. Evolving from many generations of successful technology, the Medalist's reliability benefits from the experience gained in manufacturing more than 100 million Desktop disk drives. Combining 9-millisecond average

seeks, a 512KB buffer, and an internal transfer rate up to 188 MB/sec, the exceptional performance of the Medalist 17240 benefits users of the most demanding applications.

The drives feature Seagate's patented ID-less sector format that makes available more than 480KB (93 percent) of the 512KB data buffer for user data, enhancing user performance. The drives transfer data at a rate of up to 33 Mbytes/second via the Ultra ATA interface. With capacity points of 17.2 Gbytes, 12.9 Gbytes, 10.2 Gbytes, 8.4 Gbytes, and 4.3 Gbytes, these drives provide the performance needed for virtual CD applications, rendering and animation, computer-based training, movies, internet caching and other entertainment and

business applications.

The Medalist 17240 family also includes the latest improvements for product robustness and resistance to nonoperational shock. The Medalist 17240 specifies a Mean Time Between Failure (MTBF) rating of 400,000 power-on hours, and comes with a standard, three-year limited warranty. Medalist drives also include many data integrity enhancements as part of the SeaShield System: S.M.A.R.T. capabilities have been upgraded to level III. Seagate has also recently instituted a Web-based diagnostic tool to help users avoid returning a healthy drive drive for non-drive related problems such as viruses, corrupted file systems, and hardware conflicts. ■

INTERFACE

BY ZEID NASSER

A question everyone wants to answer: How many PCs are really sold in Jordan?

IT IS amazing that after all these years of asking this question, we still don't have any conclusive answers.

How many PCs are actually sold in Jordan every year? Estimates range from as little as 8,000 all the way up to 20,000.

What is the real figure and why is it so difficult to determine it? Well, for starters, around half the PCs sold in Jordan are assembled locally.

Local assembly has canceled out credibility of customs figures on PCs entering the country. In the past, some five or six years ago, when we wanted to determine the number of PCs sold in Jordan, a trip to the Customs Department was enough. They would have a figure on the number of PCs that were subjected to customs and fees. Accordingly, you could tell how many full PC systems entered the country.

However, with the expansion of PC assembly, the volume of assembled PCs in the country reached massive proportions. Just look through the newspaper advertisements, or drop in on a number of computer distributors. The assembled PCs are everywhere and they are the first and most practical choice for single users and home users. Assembled PCs are put together from parts that are separately imported. The motherboards are purchased in bulk, so are the processors and RAM memory, and even computer cases.

Accordingly, it would be difficult to count every one of these pieces, and it would be naive to assume that every motherboard or microprocessor find its way into a new computer system. Many of these bits and pieces are used for PC upgrades, not for new systems.

Also, many of these parts are even re-exported to neighboring markets, which don't have easy access to computer parts. However, the major problem is that microprocessors, motherboards and other parts are being smuggled into Jordan, in large quantities. It is very simple. Ten motherboards can be packed among a travelers' clothes in a large suitcase, while any traveler can carry no less than fifteen Intel processors in his/her pockets! Of course, there are even more imaginative methods of smuggling.

So, what is the solution. How can we determine how many PCs are sold in Jordan? A reasonable measure, put forward by professional research bodies such as the Gartner Group assumes that the number of monitors—computer screens—is the best measure. Monitors are never smuggled, they are far too big! They are not being produced locally, because they cannot be "assembled". Even if an importer only receives the monitor tube—without the casing—it is recognized as a monitor and accounted for.

So, by summing up the number of monitors entering Jordan, we can tell how many PCs are available in Jordan.

The estimate, based on the number of monitors, puts the figure at around 12,000 a year. This means that, roughly, the same number of PCs is available in the country every year.

It has to be noted here that the 12,000 figure is the one circulated among computer and information technology professionals. It is not an officially announced figure by the Customs Dept. As of yet, there are no official announcements. What's more, there are no comprehensive studies, mainly because it is too costly to perform a very scientific survey of the Jordanian computer market. Their has to be a general move towards appreciating the value of information. Local companies have to require this information. The Jordan Computer Society should put a serious goal to provide, or facilitate, the availability of continued and credible information about the local computer sector. Until we see such moves, I doubt we will ever know, for sure, how many PCs go on sale in Jordan every year. In the information age, we need still need something so basic: information on information technology. What a pity. ■

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Children's musical bewilders audience 'The Kind Chemo' aims to raise public awareness of cancer

By Natasha Tawal
Special to the Star

THE PERFORMING Arts Center in cooperation with Noor Al Hussein Foundation's National Music Conservatory presented a unique musical on cancer which took place last week at Al Hasan Bin Talal Auditorium at the University of Jordan.

This musical is entitled 'The Kind Chemo,' and its main objective is to raise public awareness of cancer, and build positive attitudes towards confronting the disease.

The main protagonist of this musical is Samar, a child with cancer who tells the story of her ordeal including her reactions and those of her parents.

The story begins when the child enters the hospital and meets Habib, another child of her age, who has been treated with chemotherapy and has been eventually cured. Habib helps Samar in bravely confronting the disease.

The entertainment-educational approach that this musical has adopted through dance, music and drama, sent a clear message about cancer and ways to tackle it.

The revenues and donations from the one-week performances went to Al 'Im Noor Student Relief. The fund which was established two years ago aims to ensure that all the students in Jordan are given the opportunity to complete their education. This year, money from the fund will also finance the treatment of children with cancer at Al Amal Center.

"We have practiced for two whole months to come up with the Kind Chemo," said Lina Al Tal, the director of this musical and the managing director of The Arts Performing Center.

When asked about whether there are future plans to perform this musical in other Arab-neighboring countries, Al Tal said that this depends on whether they receive invitations from any neighboring countries. "This also has to coincide with the children's school vacation," she pointed out.

The lyrics and music were composed by Joseph Fakoury who died of pancreatic cancer in 1997. 'The Kind Chemo' was his last work, which he

did with the help of his two sons while dying of cancer. The choreography was prepared by Rania Qamhawi, the director of the dancing department at the Performing Arts Center.

Mohammed Othman Sidiq directed the Orchestra of the National Music Conservatory that presented a live musical performance during the show days of the play. As for the choir, it was directed by Ms Samia Ghanoum.

The Arts Performing Center was founded in 1987 to boost the art and cultural movement in Jordan by organizing educational events that aim to develop cultural awareness among Jordanians. This center also aims to bolster the talents of young Jordanians by revealing their potentials and improving their skills.

The center has established the School of Theatrical Arts, which is considered to be the first of its kind in Jordan. This distinctive school provides theoretical and practical classes in theatre and drama to youngsters of six to twenty-one.

The school also provides a comprehensive study plan in the art of directing, acting, scripts writing. The center also founded a ballet school to teach this elegant art to children since their early age. One of the major activities that the center presents is the touring-puppet group 'Kanafish'.

This project, which is sponsored by a Spanish foundation, targets Jordanian schools, presenting puppet-shows, musical performances and educational workshops. "Kanafish is considered to be one of our major projects," Al Tal said. "It

halted its activities for a while, because its cast was busy performing the kind Chemo," she added.

The activities of the Arts Performing Center are appreciated in the international scene, for it has been awarded with a silver prize for the play 'Madinat Al Sawasana' during the Third Cairo Festival for Radio and Television. The center has also received an award from the United Arab Emirates' Higher Council for Children.

Noor Al Hussein's Foundation's National Music Conservatory was founded in 1986 to provide Jordanian youth with a comprehensive musical education. Its Orchestra has performed many concerts with various visiting directors. It has also represented Jordan in many international musical festivals outside the Kingdom.



Flamboyant actress Rania Al Zaoubi climbs to fame

By Ghassan Joha
Star Staff Writer

"LIFE IS PRECIOUS, so let's enjoy it," with these words Rania Al Zaoubi, a well-known Jordanian actress, welcomed *The Star* for a short encounter.

Despite her relatively recent debut as an actress, Rania has made substantial steps in the Jordanian acting field becoming one of the familiar faces in the business.

Since her return from Britain earlier last year where she was studying, Rania started off by joining the famous theater group of Hisham Yonis. She later joined the same actor in performing a quiz show during Ramadan on Jordan television (JTV).

From the early years of her life while still in school, Rania took part in various plays. She acted in children plays like 'Oliver Twist,' which brushed up her talents and paved the way for her to gain more experience. Her perfect English helped her to pursue the career that she fell in love with.

"Since my mother is English, I spoke the language very well and chose acting for a career because it's an interesting profession," said Rania. The actress is the first in her family to set foot in this profession.

In 1991, Rania left Jordan to England to join the Guildford School of Acting. Following five years of study, Rania obtained a degree in drama. During her presence in Britain, she participated in several short movies.

She also participated in some English demos (plays about ancient Greeks). Rania even played a voice role in the Oscar-winning movie 'The English Patient.' "It was really small but an interesting role. It gave me a push to make my dream come true," she said.

Soon after her return to Jordan, Rania followed the acting road through different means. She first worked in JTV, reading the news in English. Later on, Rania worked on 'Time for Kids,' a UNICEF welfare program, also sponsored by JTV, which focused on child labor in the world.

Rania performed 'Sweet Innocence' a song written and performed by her in the program. "The song was especially pre-

pared for the program to show the numerous bad effects of child labor on future generations" the singer explained.

Officials at Jordan television liked the tune so much that they repeated the song several times on TV.

Besides acting, Rania also enjoys music. She is good in composing, singing and dancing. Since she was 8-years-old, Rania played the guitar and started to sing.

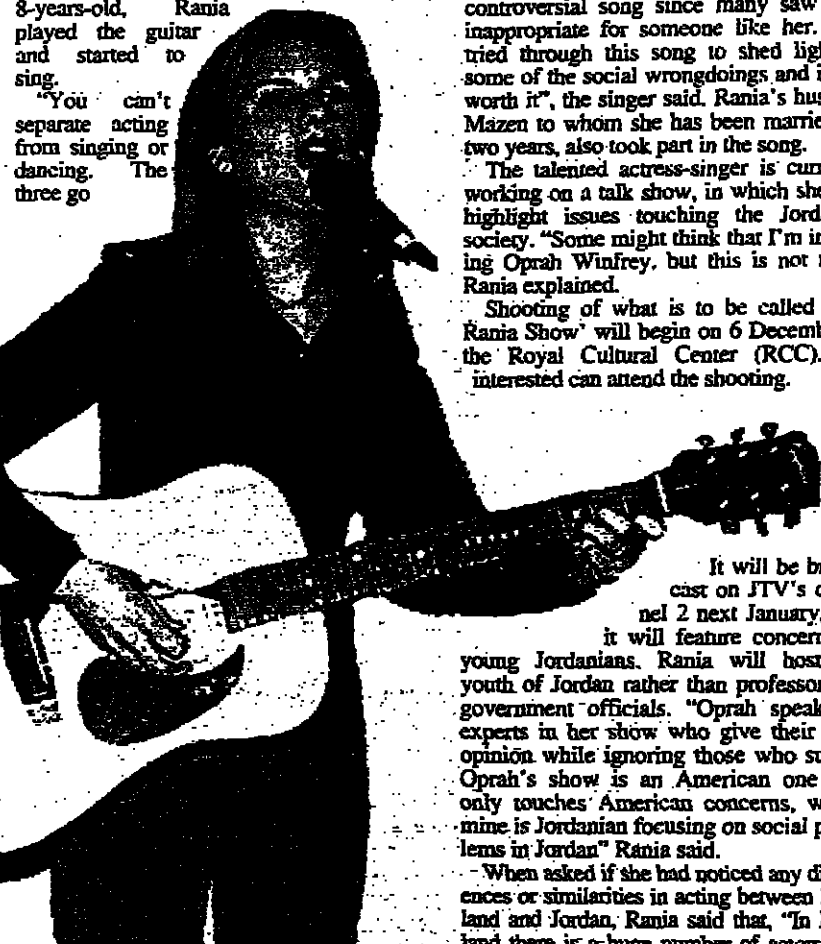
"You can't separate acting from singing or dancing. The three go

Rania added. "Zughruf," a song featuring Rania and Abu Youssef dancing in front of a fixed camera was released on JTV earlier this year. Abu Youssef is a young popular Jordanian singer who features Jordanian slang language and performs his own style of Jordanian rap.

Rania defended her participation in the controversial song since many saw it as inappropriate for someone like her. "We tried through this song to shed light on some of the social wrongdoings and it was worth it," the singer said. Rania's husband Mazen to whom she has been married for two years, also took part in the song.

The talented actress-singer is currently working on a talk show, in which she will highlight issues touching the Jordanian society. "Some might think that I'm imitating Oprah Winfrey, but this is not true," Rania explained.

Shooting of what is to be called 'The Rania Show' will begin on 6 December at the Royal Cultural Center (RCC). All interested can attend the shooting.



It will be broadcast on JTV's channel 2 next January, and it will feature concerns of young Jordanians. Rania will host the youth of Jordan rather than professors or government officials. "Oprah speaks to experts in her show who give their own opinion while ignoring those who suffer. Oprah's show is an American one that only touches American concerns, whilst mine is Jordanian focusing on social problems in Jordan," Rania said.

When asked if she had noticed any differences or similarities in acting between England and Jordan, Rania said that, "In England there is a huge number of actors and actresses and very few make it on TV, whilst here and because of the small number of people looking in the field any one can become famous by even playing a small part. Within days he/she will be the talk of town."

Rania Al Zaoubi has her own style whether in acting or singing. Hard work and determination are two words that describe the attractive young artist.

perfectly together to form a complete triangle of art," Rania said. The multi-talented Rania sings all types, blues, pop and country music.

"I'm working on producing two albums, in English and in Arabic which are to be released this coming summer. They will feature tunes of my own, and which are different from the recent song, 'Zughruf'."

In memory of Gershwin: The wizard of music

By Louis Ibrahim
Star Staff Writer

ON THE anniversary of George Gershwin's 100th birthday, an unforgettable concert was held last week at the Marriott Hotel by the Gershwin duo "Crazy About George."

Over 150 people who attended the concert, were mesmerized by the allure of songs and music performed by the duo. Pianist John Ferguson and soprano Kathryn Magestro performed over 15 pieces of Gershwin's most famous works, which were composed during the 1920s and early 1930s.

The concert started with the heavy song of 'S Wonderful,' which took the audience by surprise. The performance of Mrs Magestro filled the hall with charm and elegance.

Of course, the eminent composer doesn't need any introduction.

However, it is amazing to know that Gershwin started his first musical education at the age of 13, and had his first major hit six years later! Gershwin, who was born on 26 September 1898, went on to become one of the most prolific and famous composers of American musicals. Gershwin left school at the age of 16. After that, he was determined to become a professional composer.

As a brilliant pianist, he possessed a phenomenal energy, which made him produce musicals in a short span of time.

In his short life, the composer created a number of 23 musical comedies, and liter-

ally hundreds of songs in which his first hit, 'Swanee,' was made famous by Al Jolson.

In the early 1920, the song 'Swanee' was first performed by 60 chorus girls during a dance routine. Later on, he

melodies. Magestro, who is a native American from the state of Wisconsin, demonstrated her enormous talent of singing and acting in a wide variety of roles, ranging from 'Zerbinetta' to 'Jenny' in 'We'll's' 'Mahogany'.

She has recently appeared with the Rai Orchestra in Italy, the Vara Radio in the Netherlands and the Ensemble Intercontemporain at the Theatre De Chatelet in Paris.

On the other hand, Ferguson's artistic intuition excelled in his five years period as an artist-in-Residence for the US state of North Carolina, where he developed his own philosophy of grassroots arts programming. His solo recordings include 'Variations on America' (Joplin, Gershwin, Welch, etc.).

More famous songs were performed at the concert, including 'Our Love is Here to Stay,' and 'Someone to Watch Over Me'.

In addition to various instrumental pieces, like Gershwin's famous 'Rhapsody in Blue,' and 'The Man I Love'.

It is not a surprise to know that both performers were exceedingly influenced by the American maestro, who inspired them, along with many musicians, to indulge into the magical realm of his creativity.

Gershwin died of a brain tumor which claimed his life in 1937 at the age of 38.

In addition to his most acclaimed Broadway musicals such as 'The Wizard of Oz,' and 'Singing in the Rain,' Gershwin remains to be one of the major musical figures around the world. Today, he is referred to as 'The American Beethoven or Offenbach of the 20th century.' ■



Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder

By Farah Qasem
Star Staff Writer

SMOOTH SKIN, facial care, pedicures, and manicures are among ORLANE's beauty banquet. Through the use of high-tech equipment, you will be able to wipe out all those skin defects around your body—a goal sought by most women!

At the same time, people are mainly concerned with fast results, ignoring the fact that many 'junk products' can harm their skin rather than cure it. "There are many women rushing all over beauty markets and centers, dying to try every facial product they see on TV," Quider remarked. He added that every face has a certain proportion which must be carefully handled.

There are three types of skin

pigmentation: dry, oily, and normal. This is in addition to the sensitive skin that is basically a combination of the other three.

Oily skin needs meticulous care. It has to cool down from time to time, because it sweats a lot.

The strange thing is that food doesn't harm one's skin, as long as you don't eat a lot of different varieties at the same time. Healthy food is the best prevention.

In the ORLANE's Beauty Center, one can relax in a quiet atmosphere while the beauty experts tend to your skin with their delicate hands. Initially, you are exposed to an infra-red through a blue light beam. By interpreting specific areas of color on your face, experts can diagnose your skin type.

After

the skin, we begin to treat every issue with the required special products," Quider explained.

Fibroscope is another test which projects an image of the skin's surface, colored and enlarged 20 times, onto a monitor.

Quider's center is the only agent representing the international ORLANE Paris products in the Arab region.

"The ORLANE products are scientifically practical and nature-friendly. They are derived from marine plants, without any chemical ingredients that can sooner or later destroy the skin," Quider told *The Star*.



"Avoid animal products" is another free of charge advice from the beauty master, who explained that the skin is like a sponge, absorbing everything on its surface. There are a number of animal products which may contain diseases. Eventually, those who use such products may harm their skin.

In addition, many women are keen on covering their faces with masks made of yogurt, cucumber or bone. "One must be cautious, since germs like bacteria may penetrate the holes of the skin, causing even more damage than chemical lotions do," Quider pointed out.

The other ongoing concern for women is their hair. Quider explained that the quality of hair could be detected through the scalp and not through the boards of the hair. "The way of combing your hair is also an important issue," Quider continued. A good combing brush should reach the scalp to

remove the weak hair from its roots and activate the blood circulation.

The beauty expert emphasized that many beauty companies claim to discover the magical medicine for bolder with dead bulbs. This is just another

commercial lie.

However, Efficiency and credibility is needed, especially in this vast field of specialization. The future holds a lot of new discoveries that could change the way we care for our looks today. ■

